MORE ABOUT THE MONGOLS

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MORE ABOUT THE MONGOLS

BY

JAMES GILMOUR

AUTHOR OF 'AMONG THE MONGOLS'

SELECTED AND ARRANGED FROM THE DIARIES AND PAPERS OF JAMES GILMOUR

BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE origin of this book can be explained in very few words. The publication of *James Gilmour of Mongolia* in May 1892 deepened in many quarters where that heroic missionary was well known, and aroused in many where he had not hitherto been known, admiration for his consecrated and self-denying life and work. Among the large mass of manuscript material placed at the disposal of his biographer were long diaries, and papers printed and unprinted, of which but scanty use could be made in the record of his life. Many of these are much too good to be lost. They deal with a people, and with conditions of life and thought, far removed from the beaten Western tracks. The Mongol will

never have a truer friend than James Gilmour, and he will never be studied by keener, kindlier, or more sympathetic eyes. The friend of missionary effort, the lover of travel and adventure, the student of human nature, and even the scientific ethnologist, may all find in this volume matters of special interest and suggestiveness.

The first four chapters—that is, the larger half of the volume—have never appeared in print before. Chapters II. and III. are taken almost *verbatim* from the full diaries James Gilmour kept during those extraordinary experiences. They give in the full, day by day detail, the varying incidents of that curious life. They necessarily traverse some of the same ground covered by *Among the Mongols*, but it is believed that the reader familiar with that book will be fully compensated for this by being enabled more completely to realise the courage and endurance there displayed. A few short extracts in these two chapters will be recognised as familiar by readers of his life. Chapters V. to XI. inclusive consist of papers contributed from time to time by him to the *Chinese Recorder*, and, so far as we know, never reprinted.

Chapter XII. exhibits some of the most characteristic qualities of the man. Into it have been collected a number of published and unpublished extracts, all illustrating the way in which he constantly sought to use the daily incidents of life for purposes of spiritual growth, and how he constantly strove to arouse in the hearts of his fellows—Mongol, Chinese, and European—a faith and a love and a zeal for Jesus Christ akin to those which so completely ruled his own.

During his missionary life of twenty-one years James Gilmour was a power for good over multitudes of men and women; there are many proofs that the story of his life has been useful in stimulating others to carry on a like blessed work; and this book is sent forth with the hope and the prayer that it may, in James Gilmour's own words, help the reader 'to be able to rejoice always, even in tribulation, and to be the channel of streams of the water of life for the salvation of others.'

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MORE ABOUT THE MONGOLS

CHAPTER I

ONE DAY IN MONGOLIA

VERY early in the morning of March 27, 1873, while it was yet quite dark, some one called from outside the door of the tent. One of the two lamas who slept in the tent with me explained how the door was fastened; a few seconds more and some one entered the tent and called *me*: it was time to get up. I recognised the voice of my hostess, and asked, 'Has the dawn appeared?' 'No,' she replied; 'shall I light the fire?' 'No,' said I, groping about till I found a small butter lamp which had lighted us to bed the night before, 'light this, and that will do.'

By the time when she returned with the little butter lamp carefully sheltered between her hands, I had performed the first part of my dressing, and soon was ready to follow her to her tent. As we departed the two lamas asked us to fix up the tent-door again,

which we did, and left them to their slumbers. In the tent of my hostess I found a blazing fire and hot tea; the kind woman had been up long before, and had everything ready for me.

As I drank the reviving tea she gave me a message to convey to her mother, to whom I was going, adding that she had sent the same message long ago, but had never heard whether her mother received it or not. In England a sheet of paper and a penny stamp would have taken the message in a few hours, the distance being only twenty-five miles ; but in Mongolia, except by express messengers, intercommunication is difficult, and is carried on mostly by verbal messages conveyed by chance travellers. This is one of the reasons why travellers are so welcome in the tents of the Mongols. A traveller is in some sense a newspaper and a post-man.

After she had warmed me well with her bright fire and her warm tea, my hostess went out, brought my camel, made it kneel before the tent-door in the light of the fire, and assisted me to load and arrange my burden. When this was all finished we again entered the tent; I had a final cup, then led off my camel into the darkness, while my hostess kept the pack of savage dogs in check. As I left the tent a very faint streak of light was visible on the horizon, and I could not help contrasting this Mongolian kindness with that of some who consider themselves

more civilised. Some hosts try to manifest their hospitality by detaining their guests as long as possible; this kind woman treated me with the truest hospitality, not only by paying every possible attention to my comfort, but also by complying with my request to call me early enough to enable me to start with the first streak of dawn. In this way she extended to me the most refined and enlightened hospitality. Altogether, she was rather a superior specimen of Mongol women. Among other things she had the virtue of being industrious, and while I was drinking my tea, and talking with her, she was making thread from hamstrings of cattle. The muscle is buried, then taken up and pounded, after that it separates in fibres, and makes good strong thread for sewing shoes and other leather articles.

Many of the women are less industrious, and it not unfrequently happens that when a husband discovers he has been married to a wife who will not or cannot sew, he sends her back to her parents. The pretexts on which a wife may be divorced are many. I heard of one who was 'sent back' because she could not bring up her children, and of another who was returned because she had a bad cough. The number of these returned ones is not few, and after their divorce they may be distinguished from unmarried girls by having head ornaments, which they continue to wear; from married women by the

handkerchief with which they cover their ornaments, in token of their disgrace.

My hostess herself was the second wife of a man who had sent back his first wife for some fault or other, and one of her brothers had divorced his wife also. The frequency of these divorces is partly to be accounted for by the manner in which matches are made. Not only are the young people not consulted, but sometimes the parents even have but little say in the matter. No marriage is valid without the sanction of the chief. Sometimes the would-be husband's friends get the chief to sanction a union; the chief communicates his pleasure to the young woman's friends, who, unless wealthy and powerful, dare not disobey, and the thing is settled.

One morning a horseman rode into Kalgan with a message to the effect that the chief had arranged for my teacher's daughter's marriage. My teacher, though taken by surprise, did not seem at all astonished, but asked a fortnight's leave to superintend the feasting, brought a few necessary things, mounted the saddled horse that had been sent for him, rode up into Mongolia, sent off his daughter, and in two weeks returned to his work, seemingly perfectly satisfied. The young lady thus summarily disposed of was no other than my kind hostess, who held back the dogs as I left her tent in the darkness of the early dawn.

A short march brought us, the camel and me, to the great road. A year and a half before I had passed through this district in the night, and it was curious to see what different aspects the landscape presented in the morning light as compared with the impressions I had got of it in the dark. Then, all was vague, uncertain, and gloomy; now, things began to be seen distinctly, and looked bright and hopeful in the morning light. By-and-by, the joy of the scene was crowned by the appearance of the great sun, verifying the saying of a Mongol, who after a dark travel, as the glowing disc lifted itself above the horizon, hitched himself round in his saddle and exclaimed, 'Glad is the sun to the wayfaring man.'

The scene was now beautiful. The plain, sloping gently upwards, stretched away to the west, dotted here and there with clusters of tents, from around which came the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen. Away to the right was a man driving some horses, to water them at a well; to the left the argol gatherers had come forth to their day's work, attended by their ox cart. Straight before stood a large drove of horses, satiated with the abundant grass. Idly they stood, bathing themselves in the sunlight, and rolling themselves on the sand. In the midst of this drove I met a lama, richly dressed and mounted on a fine steed. On hearing where I was going, he told me of a nearer road; then, saying that he came from

Wu T'ai, that he had been to Russia (he took me for a Russian), and that he was on a business journey, he wheeled his horse, turned his round and cleanly shaven head, and rode off, with his massive silver ornaments glancing in the sun.

The lama system of Mongolia necessitates the existence of such men. It is true that most of the temples are endowed; in addition to this they receive the offerings of the pious pilgrims and the gifts of the sick, but this is not sufficient, and special begging agents are from time to time sent out to exhort the faithful to make additional offerings. These begging agents are for the most part capable business men; they receive the offerings mostly in cattle, horses, &c., which they drive off and sell, and in this way the final sum realised on a begging expedition depends to a great extent on the ability and address of the agent. Frequently large sums are collected, but accidents sometimes happen. In Peking I made the acquaintance of a lama who had gone out from Wu T'ai on a begging excursion, and in a few months collected a valuable drove of horses and some oxen. These he was driving southwards to the Chinese market, and had almost reached the frontier of Mongolia, when a Mongol, more covetous than pious, seized his horses and cattle, swore that thieves had stolen them, and hinted to the lama that he had better be gone. The lama went to the magistrate

and complained; the case came up for trial, the defendant's influence and money carried the day, and the unfortunate lama was thrown into prison, where he remained a year. After a time a new trial was arranged to come off, the former verdict was reversed, the lama was acquitted, and his oppressor commanded to make restitution of a certain part of the property which was clearly proved to have been appropriated by him. Still the lama was not satisfied, and, when I knew him, was hanging about the Yamens in Peking, hoping to be able to institute proceedings that would lead to the restitution of the lost property in full. As he had neither influence to secure the ear of the great men, nor money to buy over the underlings, his chance of success seemed small, and his case altogether miserable, as without the money he could not show his face in Wu T'ai. In token of the wrong he had suffered, he had not shaved his head for a year and a half; his hair was long and gathered up in a knot behind, his purse was empty, his dress was poor, his expedition had failed, and left him an oppressed outcast, an object of pity.

Hoping that the lama I had just met might be more happy in his expedition, I followed his directions, and soon perceived a feature of the landscape with which I was familiar. This was what the Mongols call the 'Bad Wall,' originally an earth wall, now reduced to the height of three or four feet, but

quite visible, and extending over the plain like a gentle wave. The Great Wall the Mongols call the 'White Wall,' distinguishing the part of it they are accustomed to see at Kalgan as the 'Kalgan Wall.'

Soon after passing the Bad Wall, I thought I recognised some of the hills as old friends, and left the road to take a short cut to my destination. From the top of a low hill I saw my mistake, and found myself in a strange country, with only a faint path to guide me, and the tents—if such they were—at great distances, and everything so distorted by the mirage that it was impossible to discern anything distinctly. There was nothing for it but to return to the path I had left, and follow that patiently. This I followed for a long time, which seemed much longer than it really was, and at last came upon a cluster of tents.

Here, as usual, I was well received and regaled with tea, but treated with a little too much familiarity by a young pert lama boy, who presumed on having been introduced to me in Peking, and set about emptying my pockets without the least regard to my wishes. When I asked him to point out my way, he said he did not know the locality, though it was his native place, adding that if I would give him money he would put me all right. Another man to whom I applied informed me that there was no road, but that if I would give him silver money he would tell me how to go. This mean conduct, so unlike the

true Mongol frankness, made me anxious to leave the place at once. A poor boy, who seemed ashamed of the other two, pointed out the direction I should follow, and I started again, wondering at the churlishness of the men who, unless I gave them money, refused to point out my way, and denied me the use of their bucket to draw water from the well for my camel. Such Mongols I have seldom seen, and hope never to see again.

A little way on I found a shepherd tending his sheep in Mongol fashion on horseback. On his back he had a large felt bag, in which he deposited newly dropped lambs. He seemed better-hearted than his neighbours, pointed out my way, and with his lambs at his back rode off, driving his sheep to better pasture. This matter of sheep-tending well illustrates the difference between Mongols and Chinamen. Mongols always watch their flock on horseback; Chinamen never. The Chinaman goes on foot, and thus does the same amount of work equally well, if not better, at less expense. The reason why, in this particular case, the Chinaman can do without the horse necessary to the Mongol is that the Chinaman's shoes are light, and enable him to walk easily; his garments also are handy, and when he becomes too hot he can throw off his outer jacket. The Mongol's boots are huge, ill-fitting, clumsy, and ill-adapted for walking. In them he feels as if his

feet were thrust down into a mitigated pair of movable stocks. He has only one coat, warm enough to keep out the cold, but too heavy and cumbersome to move about in, and so for locomotion he has to trust his horse. Where Mongols and Chinamen come into competition, the Mongol finds himself at a great disadvantage. For almost everything, except mutton and milk, the Mongols are dependent on Chinamen. Chinamen, able to make a living where a Mongol would starve, have encroached much on Mongolia already, are encroaching still, and where they will stop it is impossible to guess.

One reason why I was anxious to leave the tent of the mercenary people was that, when I unbuttoned my greatcoat, I found my head, neck, and cravat swarming with a species of animal resembling a bed bug. An enormous number of them seemed to have fixed themselves upon me; even the Mongols were amazed, and began to pick them off. I felt very uneasy at being so infested with vermin as to shock Mongols even, and left as soon as I could. After passing the mounted shepherd I turned my attention to the animals, and dismissed about two score of them, trying to convince myself that they came from the camel I was riding. Some time afterwards I had occasion to dismount and walk, and in a few minutes found about a dozen of the animals crawling up my

trousers. This seemed more unaccountable still, but the secret soon came out: they were in the grass. The Mongols call these animals *sheeljie.* They are a sort of tick, and appear only in spring. They usually select a tall spear of grass, climb to the top, turn their heads downwards, hold on by four legs, throw out the remaining four, and wait till some animal chances to come that way. As the victim approaches, they throw out another pair of legs, hang to the grass by the remaining pair, and if the animal brushes their perch, they instantly catch the hair, let go their former hold, and are now launched in life.

The first thing they seem to do is to climb to the highest point of the animal, then prowl about till they find a convenient spot to insert their thirsty fangs into the juicy skin; that done, their fortune is made. A few days afterwards they appear transformed into whitish-looking bags of blood, oval in shape, and almost as thick as a man's finger. When completely filled they let go the skin, but maintain a precarious footing by holding on to the hair or mane. Eventually they drop off. The number of these animals is enormous. I have counted as many as eight or nine on a single blade of grass, and two days of my present journey lay through pastures simply loaded with them. In almost every tent there was set a bowl or pot of water, for the reception of such as the inhabitants caught upon their persons. In one tent,

where no water was prepared, I took to throwing them into the fire. This caused a sensation of horror among the pious Buddhist women, who could not stand the sight of such wholesale murder before their very eyes.

To throw the creatures on the ground was useless, as they travel quickly, and seeing me hesitate, and still inclined to throw them into the flames, one of the women solved the difficulty to the seeming satisfaction of the household, by forcing some hot ashes out of the fire and telling me to throw the animals there, where they perished by a slower and more painful death. On another occasion I asked a woman how it was less of a crime to drown an animal than to burn it. She explained that a *sheeljie* thrown into the fire died; thrown into the water it only suffered suspension of animation, and as soon as thrown out it recovered, scrambled off, and perched itself once more on the grass to try another venture in life. When I doubted the power of the *sheeljie* to live under water, they brought me the bowl, tilted it up a little, and sure enough a whole crowd of them, that seemed to all appearance dead, began to move their legs and stir themselves generally, as if they thought their second chance had come.

That morning, while picking the *sheeljie* off my clothes, I almost lost my way, but, remembering I had to pass a hill with a cairn on it, I made for that. At

first the hill did not seem very far distant, but after a good deal of travelling it did not seem much nearer, the mirage, as before, making all attempts at guessing distance useless. After a long and weary march through this pathless plain, at last there appeared a man on an ox cart with two oxen travelling at quite a rapid pace. His course and mine slowly converged, and at last we met. He had on his cart two bags of grain, and was going off to plough and sow. There are patches of land cultivated by the Mongols, but the cultivation is done in such a careless and lazy way that little comes of it.

This man pointed out my route afresh, but seemed rather dubious as to the possibility of my reaching my destination that day. This was strange, as I had been assured overnight that I could get to my journey's end almost by noon. The last words of the man were, like the postscript of a lady's letter, the most important. After we had parted, he turned round, and pointing over the plain shouted, 'There are two tents there, the people there will be able to put you on the right road.' I travelled in the direction indicated, and after some time the tents hove in sight. Not far from them were about a dozen men and women gathering argols, but they evidently had no connection with the tents.

As I came up to the tents I could see the women running about in a state of alarm, and, in answer to my call to 'check the dogs,' two men, a lama and a

layman, issued from one of the tents. The women mustered courage enough to follow the men, and there the whole population of the place stood before me. There was something suspicious and unsatisfactory about the look of the place and the people. The lama rejoiced in no clothing except a pair of skin trousers, the layman was busy throwing a coat about his naked shoulders, the women looked more untidy than even Mongol women usually do, there seemed to be no children about the place; the tents, too, looked disreputable, and their surroundings were unsatisfactory. The conversation that ensued was also discouraging. I could not finish my journey that day, it was not to be thought of, even. There was no road, and there were no tents on the route.

On hearing that I came from Peking the layman concluded that I was a Russian. I said I was not a Russian, but a Britisher. Some more talk took place, and the layman remarked to the other that I was *Mo Orus*. Now the colloquial *Mo* may be a contraction for either of two words, *Mago*, 'bad,' or *Moun*, 'indeed, and, judging from other things, I concluded he meant by his remark that I was of these 'wicked Russians'! This was not reassuring, and I felt inclined to go, but I had had quite enough of desolate plain and uninhabited land for one day already, even without running the risk of camping out among the wolves for the night.

Just a few days before I had heard of a large number of sheep being killed in a single night by a fierce pack of wolves ; might they not come in numbers enough to devour a single man and a single camel ? These considerations, then, urged me to put up for the night where I was. On the other hand, I remembered the saying of a man who had travelled in Mongolia, that to go about as I intended to do, and was then doing, would be dangerous. I remembered also the case of a Russian who went alone, was found dead, and whose death remains a mystery to this day, though every possible means were used to elicit the truth.

But there was another consideration, and this decided my course. All along the road Mongols who saluted me asked if I travelled alone and had no revolver. I answered that I did travel alone, and had no firearms. When they expressed astonishment I hastened to tell them that the God I preached went with me, protected me, and was ever so much better than the best revolver. Beginning from this, I usually went on and gave them a rapid statement of the main points of our religion. They usually listened, and expressed astonished assent. Now, then, there seemed to have arisen an occasion when the excellence of my God as a protector would be put to the test, and was I not to trust Him? Was all my talking to have no fruit in action? When this

thought crossed my mind I at once decided, and said to the layman, 'If you'll have me, I'll put up with you for the night.' 'Have you! Certainly we'll have you,' said the layman. I moved my camel a few steps nearer the tent, made him kneel down, dismounted, and entered.

The inside of the tent looked more unsatisfactory than the outside even, a prominent part of the furniture being three well-appointed Mongol guns, apparently ready for action. As I had hardly ever seen a gun before in any one of the many Mongol tents I had entered, I could not help thinking the presence of *three* guns in one tent strange. Almost as soon as we entered, the layman reduced his dress to the skin trousers and nothing else, said hurriedly, 'Drink tea; I'm busy,' and turned his attention to a pot, in which he began rubbing some black powdery substance with a smooth stone. On asking him what he was about, he said, 'Making gunpowder,' and sure enough there he was close by the fire grinding away at it. I thought it dangerous, but said nothing. In a few minutes, however, one of the women remonstrated, and the grinding-pot—the primitive powder-mill—was shifted a little back. After the grinding was finished, it was again damped, passed through the holes in a perforated piece of tin, and set out in the pot to dry in the sun. In a little while it was pronounced dry, and the impatient manufacturer

proceeded to test its quality. A little was placed on a piece of wood, and then touched with the red ember of a grass stalk; but no response. At length, after repeated attempts, the powder took fire, and blazed rather than exploded. It now appeared that our alarm and dread of an explosion were quite uncalled for; the article was so poor that even if it had ignited it would have burnt itself harmlessly away. The manufacturer was nothing daunted, but remarking that it was still damp, put it into a little cloth bag, and hung it from the roof of the tent.

Now was my opportunity. The layman seemed inclined to rest, and handed over the pot to his wife to clean. She took a scraper, and always as she scraped off a little heap of black dust, applied a red grass stalk to it, and caused a tiny explosion. I began by asking my host if he could read. He said he could not. I remarked I could, and offered to read him a part of the Mongolian catechism. He seemed quite pleased with the idea, so I read, and explained as I went on.

The lama, who was sitting beyond my host the layman, stretched over towards me and listened; ever and again assenting vigorously to many of the doctrines propounded. At length the layman, laughing, and in a tone of good companionship, said to the lama, 'I suppose you know all about it?' The lama seemed not at all abashed, and when I

came to read the commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' with his open hand gave his companion a great slap on his bare back, and looked at him as if he meant, 'That's into you.' From this I verily thought my worst suspicions confirmed, and was afraid that I had got into a den of thieves. After some more reading and conversation, the lama took to proposing doctrinal questions, simple enough in themselves, but in his opinion very difficult. The answers were easy enough, but seemed very wise to the lama, who after a while subsided into laughing good humour, remarking that 'It was impossible to talk with this man, who always struck the nail on the head; he would kill a fellow.' During the reading and conversation I was much pleased with the attention of the women throughout, and especially with the manner in which they regarded and repeated the prayer which I always teach the Mongols is the central part of Christianity: 'O Jesus, save my soul.'

After this spell at things sacred, the layman bestirred himself, and attended to things secular. He took down one of the three guns, dismantled it, and set about cleaning it. The gun used by the Mongols is very long in the barrel and small in the bore. The stock runs along the whole length of the barrel, and near the muzzle is a two-legged rest attached, that the marksman—who generally lies full length on the ground—may take the surer aim.

After unfastening the barrel, our host drew a strand of camel's hair through a hole in the end of the ramrod and washed out the gun; then drew another strand through the same hole and dried it out nicely. The proper fixing up of the barrel again, and the arranging of the rude matchlock, proved a matter of more difficulty, and before it was finished the lama dressed, caught his horses, and departed.

He was a fair specimen of a young and not over-religious lama. He was a great laugher, and evidently a great chum of the black man, our host. These two men illustrated well the difference I have often noticed between the lama and the layman. The lama, however old he may be, is an overgrown boy, frivolous, giddy, and up to tricks. The black man, as the Mongols call the layman, is sedate, sober, and grave, a matured man, in fact. The lama seems unsteady from lacking the cares of a family to ballast him, and though he is for the most part more lively than the black man, yet the black man's gravity makes pleasanter companionship than the lama's mirth. The manifest unaccomplished manhood of the majority of Mongol lamas is a very serious argument against celibacy.

The lama had hardly gone when another visitor appeared, a young man, a black man, much weather-beaten and brown with exposure to the sun. He was received by his brother-in-law with a hearty welcome,

and had to test the newly made powder, and the old powder also, to see which was the better. The old was decidedly so, and the repeated testings to which the new powder was subjected, in the hope that it might do better, consumed a large percentage of its whole bulk.

I said our host was a sedate and sober man: his sedateness was soon put to the test. His old mother entered his tent, and began to talk excitedly and in a loud tone of voice. The son, hearing that it was all about some row over some few argols, said quietly that he would listen to no such matters, and went on fixing his guns. She, nothing daunted, rattled away at a great rate, while her son, beyond now and then uttering an expression of gentle impatience, paid no attention to her words. When she had finished, he asked her some good-natured question about something, and the old woman soon arose to depart, having experienced evident relief from the expression of her feelings. From the young man's conduct I judged that he was a wise and good son, and shortly after I found that the mother was of the same opinion exactly. She came in, took a seat beside me, and confided to me the whole family circumstances. She and her husband were not rich, but they were in no danger of poverty. They had not large herds, but enough to let them live well and comfortably. They had a son and a daughter. The daughter was at

service, the son was my host, a first-class man, according to her account—a man who owned good guns and killed deer; a man who was in Government employ, and the sole heir to his father's good name and property. In short, the young man exhibited all the virtues of his sire, and was even superior to him in that he did not drink whisky.

Afterwards she gave me an account of her journey the year before to Peking, the places she put up in, and the temples where she worshipped. This was my opportunity, and I told her how our religion does not require us to go on long pilgrimages to pray, that wherever we are we are equally near to God, and that prayer is just as acceptable in one place as in another.

When our religious conversation ended, I borrowed a knife and a basin, and gave out mutton and flour for dinner. All were pleased and helpful, and when I confessed that I was not much of a cook, the old mother said her son was a great hand at making dinner. The son, with the greatest good humour, washed his hands and took the dinner in hand. He proved himself quite worthy of the praise his mother had bestowed on him, and quickly set my dinner steaming before me. I set to work, and his mother, who meantime had gone out, returned, and, at her son's request, took the seat of highest honour in the tent. I wanted her to share my dinner, and after

some pressing she consented to eat a little. Over our dinner we became faster friends, and much more confidential, and in the conversation that ensued I had several opportunities of introducing Christian topics and doctrine.

At eventide I went out to the plain to meditate, and, when the sun had fairly set, led home my camel and fastened him up for the night. On entering the tent I found my host's father had come home; the usual salutations took place, and then he began to ask about the object of my journey. I introduced him to my books and tracts, and as he did not read took the opportunity to explain them to him, telling him specially about Christ and His salvation. The weather-beaten tough old man listened well and respectfully, and, as he was about to leave, I asked him about to-morrow's road. Taking his pipe from his mouth, and suiting the action to the word, he drew lines confusedly through each other on the same spot of the floor-felt, saying, 'When you leave here go on till you come to a stone fold, from that go to the well, then don't go the road that runs so, but follow the road that runs so; then you'll come to a great road that runs so, cut it through so, and go on so till you come to another stone fold with a three-mouthed well, then don't take the road that runs so but take the road that runs so; after that you will come to a great road that runs so, follow it a little,

then cut it through so, then pass the white cairn so and you are near your destination.' Having thus given me the 'marks of the road,' he departed to go to his own tent, and left my head turning in a maze of three-mouthed wells, great roads, cross roads, and stone folds.

We now supposed we were alone for the night, and our host—whom his mother has described as such an excellent teetotaler—produced a jar of whisky and a pewter feeding-bottle. The feeding-bottle is the same in principle as the infants' feeding-bottle, only the article used by the Mongols has no glass or indiarubber about it. It is made of pewter, and in common use in Mongolia.

As the bottle was about to be filled, a step was heard approaching. The teetotal reputation was in danger, and jar and bottle quickly disappeared into a small cupboard. The visitor was a woman; she must have smelt the spirit, but was too wise to say anything, or probably she was in the secret. After she departed the hidden articles reappeared, and the feeding-bottle was so frequently sucked that twice it was emptied before it was finally put away in the cupboard, where were kept the official cap, the silk coat, and the silver ornamented belt.

Even the remote and sparse population of Mongolia escape not the curse of drink, and melancholy wrecks of health and fortune have no effect

in restraining young men from joining the already too numerous band of drinkers. Here was a young man choosing destruction, with his eyes open to the evil and danger of his course. About a month before, a few miles away a young man of about thirty-three paid his father a visit, mounted his horse to ride home, and when next seen he was lying dead with the blood oozing from his ears and mouth. This young man was one of my special friends, and the first-born and right hand of his aged father. 'How came he to fall from his horse?' I asked again and again of those who knew him. 'Don't know,' was all the answer I could get for a time, but at last the truth came out. He had been drinking, and the drink slew him within half a mile of his father's tent.

The evil of drink is admitted by all, but custom, the good ally of the devil, requires the mistress of the house to set it before her visitors. I, as a teetotaler, always refuse it, and speak of its evil, and in most cases even those who offer it agree heartily with what I say, and add with emphasis, 'Drink is indeed evil.' The desolation, poverty, misery, sin, and death caused by drink in Mongolia are as great as elsewhere, and its fatal fascination seems even stronger than elsewhere. With many Mongols the only limit to drinking seems to be the bottom of the jar. Poverty and inability to procure drink keep many a man sober for weeks, who in other circumstances would soon kill himself.

The main predisposing causes to drink I conceive to be extreme sameness of diet, and inability, from ignorance and want of books, to experience intellectual pleasures. Humanly speaking, schoolmasters and cooks might do much for Mongolia. My host, it is true, kept well inside the bounds of moderation, but it was sad to see this rather superior young man, with a good start in life and rising prospects, acquiring a habit which blights more prospects and ruins more men than all the droughts and snowstorms which scatter white bones to bleach on the wide plains of Mongolia.

After dark our host happened to step outside the tent, and instantly we heard a loud *Hoi*, an exclamation of surprise. We all rushed out and, lo, the whole eastern horizon seemed in a blaze. 'There is a great fire,' said the Mongols, and, true enough, a great fire had broken out. The day before I had noticed distant clouds of smoke ascending to the sky; that day I had passed within perhaps ten miles of smoking hills, but it was only when the lurid flame glared red in the darkness that the extent of the conflagration could be seen. From our point of view the fire seemed to extend in one unbroken line for many miles. Along one half of the line of fire only a red glare could be seen, as some higher ground cut off our view, but along the whole length of the other half the living flame leaped up in some places to a seeming

height of about six feet. It was truly a fearful sight. Even my camel was alarmed, and had shifted his position so that he could lie down watching it.

The Mongols speculated excitedly as to the locality of the fire, and then raised the all-important question, 'How does the wind blow?' One of the number threw a handful of ashes in the air, and all felt relieved as the dust was seen to float slowly from the tent towards the fire. A good deal of rapid talking followed, all of which I could not make out, but the drift of the conversation seemed to be that the father judged the fire to have originated at the cultivated land, and the son accounted for its doubling back towards them by the fact that a rash neighbour had been foolish enough to kill a goat. One of the women asked an important question, 'Has it crossed the great road?' Sometimes, when the dry grass catches fire, nothing but a great road will stop it. Sometimes it is said that these fires rush along so fiercely that even the tents cannot be protected from them, but in our case the only question was the loss of the pasture. If the wind had turned and blown towards us, the whole plain might have been left black and bare, and the inhabitants compelled to seek other pasture. The cattle, during the winter, had rendered the tents safe by cropping all the grass close away, and as there was still a great road between the fire and us, we said our prayers and prepared for bed.

The sight of the fire, I think, rendered the Mongols more fervent in their devotions, reminding them how utterly helpless they were in the presence of such a phenomenon, and how completely, in such circumstances, they were dependent upon a Higher Power who ruled the winds. The husband counted his beads and mumbled his charms; the wife asked him to remove the loaded gun which he had placed near the altar, and then went through a long series of prostrations, accompanied by muttered prayers. Though they were more devout than usual, they looked about and made remarks in a manner which proved that, as usual, their worship was that of the body and the lip only, extra fervency of devotion being manifested in the increased quantity, not in the quality, of the worship.

Finally we all lay down to sleep, the Mongols to dream of the wild fire, and I thankful that I had been detained in this tent, in which I had so many opportunities of instructing this family in the things of Christ.

After a good night's rest, broken occasionally by confused visions of fire, great roads, cross roads, stone folds, and three-mouthed wells, daylight began to peep into our tent, and warned us that the night was past. In the morning no trace of the fire was visible anywhere near; what in darkness had seemed near was indeed miles and miles away.

After drinking tea my host pointed out my way so clearly that, though a little intricate, I threaded it out without much difficulty. I never saw him again, but I retained the most lively sense of his kindness, and feel sure that he called me not 'A wicked Russian,' but a 'Russian indeed.'

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST JOURNEY ACROSS THE DESERT OF GOBI

IN May 1870, James Gilmour reached Peking, and became attached to the London Mission in that city. He had been there only a little over a month when the massacre of Roman Catholics at Tientsin took place. It was in keeping with the character of the man, that at a time of difficulty and danger, when the air was full of rumours, and when many of the most experienced missionaries were anxiously consulting how to secure personal safety for themselves and their friends, his chief concern was how to get the work done for which he had been sent. He finally resolved to get that work done by doing it; and so, ignorant of the language, an absolute stranger to the country, taking his life in his hand, with childlike trust in the loving care of the God to whose service he had fully consecrated himself, he left Peking and went forth to attempt to conquer Mongolia for Christ. Missionary annals of the nineteenth century abound in heroic and self-denying

deeds, but even they can furnish no finer example of whole-hearted devotion to work.

It was also characteristic of James Gilmour to keep a full record of his daily experiences, and of his spiritual state from time to time. His diary of those early and lonely days and years of Mongolian life is unique. This generation will never again see through eyes so keen and so sympathetic Mongol life and character in all its freshness. Hence it has been thought advisable to put on permanent record, in an easily accessible form, his own story of his hopes and fears, his wearying journeys, his strenuous toil in acquiring the language, his willingness to share all the hardships of winter life in a Mongol tent, if by so doing he could master their hard speech, and finally obtain an entrance into their still harder hearts.

As this experience will probably never be repeated by any European who can, or who will, so record its varying daily incidents, the diary is printed exactly as James Gilmour wrote it, with the sole exception that passages dealing with purely temporal and passing details have been omitted. The only other departures from the text of the manuscript are few and trifling, and have been made solely to render the writer's meaning more intelligible to the general reader. The extracts begin with the entry for the day on which he left Peking for Kalgan, *en route* for Urga and Kiachta. While perusing them the reader

will remember that no thought of publication entered the writer's mind. It is hoped that most will feel that to be thus enabled to live day by day with the writer in the midst of his novel scenes and experiences compensates for lack of literary and narrative finish.

Friday, August 5, 1870.—Rose early and set about starting. Chair came at breakfast time, and after inspecting it set about getting away in earnest. When we were about to start, it was found that the mule for the baggage was only a donkey! That was sell number one. Started about 10 A.M. Bad streets; turned up one to avoid water, and found ourselves confronted by almost a quarter of a mile of water, which we had to pass. Got clear of the city and suburbs, when, as soon as we came to a plain place and I was looking with admiration on the first field of Kao Liang[1] I had ever seen, I was conscious of the stern of the chair descending. I at once leapt out, and found the rear mule peacefully reclining on the ground. We got the creature and the chair up, when down went the animal again. It did not repeat the experiment to-day, and I hope it will not try it to-morrow when we are in a difficult pass.

People everywhere polite enough, but given to

[1] A kind of tall wheat or millet.

staring a good deal. Were joined by two or three more chairs about 3 o'clock, and it was well that it was so, for a short time after we came to very bad roads, so bad that one chair, mule and all, went down a bank into water, not doing much damage besides smashing some water melons which seemed to be the sole occupants of the vehicle. My chair also came down at the same point, but I was not more nearly concerned in it than being a spectator. For a great part of the road this afternoon it may be said that what is commonly the road is now a stream, a canal, or a lake, as the case may be. We had frequent cases of come-down this afternoon, and that was no disgrace to the mules—they are good, sure-footed beasts—but of the roads. Came upon a finely built bridge of two arches, granite, standing away up out of the stream, utterly useless, as the stream has changed its course and found a much lower level.

The view of the mountains was very good to-day. At first they were distant, but we came up to them gradually till we were moving up a semicircle, the mountains stretching away behind us. Sunset was grand. One side of the mountains was dark, and pieces of mist rose up from the bosom hollows. One piece near the top flowed up into the light of the setting sun and was tinged to red. Clouds also were beautiful. Here at Hsi Kuan we are about eighty

li[1] from Peking. We are close to the mountains here and I hope to have more cool weather to-morrow.

Saturday, August 6, 1870.—Awoke about 4.30. Started about 6 A.M. Nan Kou 8.45 A.M. The passage hither was pleasant, road good, as we are now on sand and stones; as we came close to the town here all was large stones and boulders from the mountains. Kao Liang plots got fewer and fewer. The mules have a great fashion of going into it and treading it down on purpose to rub off the flies. The Kao Liang is from eight to ten feet high, and the stalk is largely used for fuel. There is rather a small head on it this year, which is said to be on account of the excessive wet and heat, but I suspect that it never has a large head. To-day the rear mule lay down once.

The sight of the mountains is quite refreshing, but the temperature has not fallen much as yet. The mountains came down quite abruptly to the plain. The outline is good, other peaks looking out from behind. The structure of the mountains reminds me much of the appearance of the Red Sea mountains close to Suez, only here they are not barren as there. This inn is not a very first-class affair, but it has good trade, evidently, and plenty of noise. I have made a good breakfast.

[1] There are three li to the English mile.

On leaving Nan Kou I saw my luggage tumbled right off the back of a donkey. The whole load fell on the corner of the portmanteau, and caved that in. Almost the whole day after the luggage was behind out of sight, and I felt a little anxious about it, as it contained about 50*l.* or 60*l.* of silver. I think I must shift it to-night into my chair, as it is rather much to lose. There was in our company to-day a man travelling with a donkey-load of silver, and I noticed that said animal was always in front of his chair. The silver is going up to the Mongols.

We have travelled to-day only about eight hours, as far as I can make out, interrupted by repeated reclinations of my rear mule. I am amused to see how quietly the men take the thing altogether. They simply set about putting the animal square again, omitting the usual English preliminary of cursing and thrashing. Why they don't thrash the animal I don't see. Is a mule incapable of being taught?

The scenery to-day was grand in the extreme. Nan Kou is a real mountain pass; the stones and general roughness are something that makes it next to a marvel for a mule to get through; yet we never came down to-day accidentally, and I must say for that mule that it has sense enough to choose good places for resting. There were one or two places really fearful to look down over out of the swinging chair. I cannot attempt any description. Hills,

rocks, passes, water, greenness with little temples perched here and there, which with the winding group of travellers added greatly to the picturesque. I think I am safe in saying, that in all the essentials to good scenery this pass is not behind anything that I have seen in Britain or elsewhere. Then there is the quantity of it. I slept through part of it. The battlemented walls running up hillsides to the towers on the top give it a great advantage over similar scenery at home.

The pass is strongly fortified in various parts, but the fortifications, though too strong to crumble to ruins, betray the dilapidation of neglect. In great gateways the gate is one half wanting, the other part immovable. Perhaps the most remarkable thing was the manner in which a cart was dragged over the stones. Judging *a priori* the thing was impossible, but it was done. The cart must be strong, no European wheels could stand that. At some places we could see the marks of cart-wheels worn deep into hard stones; at other places were elaborate bridges or raised platforms for passing dangerous parts of the stream, and altogether there are indications that this pass was once an object of great attention. There was, no doubt, a good road once. Now how changed!

Sabbath, August 7, 1870.—Started this morning about 5.30, and set away downwards, but not descending much. There was a vast oblong space in

front hemmed round with mountains. We were pretty near, comparatively speaking, to the mountains that bounded on the west. The elevation of this gently descending tableland is evidently great, as it is much cooler here, and the vegetation is very sparse and poor compared with that met with in the rich plain of Chili. At 10 A.M. we arrived at Huai Lai Hien, which is a pretty busy town. About 4.30 P.M. came to Sha Cheng, which is larger and evidently important. Its gates and fortifications are immensely strong, but in a sad state of disrepair. I do not know if a single gate can be shut. Mule lay down once this forenoon, several times in the afternoon. At the inn, which was very much crowded with pack cattle, spoke with a Chinese dealer in Mongol goods. He spoke a little Mongol. Went to bed in chair, 8 P.M. Awoke 2 A.M., cold, did not sleep much after that. Tried to think over the rightness and wrongness of Sabbath travelling. I do not think it right. I do not know but that I am doing wrong in travelling to-day. Reading at *Eclipse of Faith.*

Monday, August 8, 1870.—This morning we started and headed steadily for a prominent hill called Chi Ming, or 'Cockcrow.' The country is a little richer than yesterday, but not much. As we came towards Chi Ming, we had a better view of this great plain, though we kept close up to the mountains. It is alluvial sand or mud, without any cohesive

element; you just make a break or hole in a stream, and that goes on *ad infinitum*. We were greatly troubled by these excavations; they commence somewhere away down in the lower levels of the plain and as the water rushes down from the mountains they rapidly run up backwards towards the hills. One of these rapidly travelling excavations that we fell in with was, say, eleven feet deep and twenty feet broad, and gave signs of rapidly increasing in length. The paths are much disturbed on this account, and though a man may have done the journey twenty times, he has to look out his way when he passes for the twenty-first time.

Mule lay down about 8 A.M., and I walked till it lay down again, about 8.30. I was glad to walk, as the wind was really cold, coming from these mountains and heights that face us to the north. Cockcrow Hill has a large monastery on the top. The altitude of the hill I do not know. At the foot of the hill lies the town of the same name. It is not seen till quite near, and from the outside evinces a state of good repair. As we came close to it we met a string of camels, tended by three Mongols in reddish clothing. The burdens were skins. I counted seventeen loaded animals, all strung together and led by one man mounted on a camel. In the rear were other two men on camels. As we passed the chain broke, and one of the camels lay down. One Mongol rode

forward to put things to rights, but as my chair just then was swinging on the top of a wall with water on one side, I could not look back to see what ensued. Outside the city were several large threshing-floors in full operation. Horses or donkeys trotting round with a conical stone roller in a frame, and men throwing up the grain to be winnowed from the chaff. We are in an inn just outside the city.

10.40 A.M. to 4.45 P.M. Without break from Chi Ming to Hsüan Hua Fu, sixty li; this the most startling part of the trip yet passed. From Cockcrow we pass round an immense basin caused by the river Yang. This great circular basin has at one time been an alluvial plain on a much higher level than that to which the river has now reduced it; at one place we passed over the old level, which was being fast washed away. It stood on upright but crumbling bank, some fifteen or more feet high, and was so much indented that at places it was dangerous to pass. Further on we came to a part where all the soil had been washed down, so that we had to pass along a very imperfect track on the rock at the foot of the hill. This was the worst part; so bad was it that the carts took to the sand of the river in preference. After this we kept away along the side of the river, in many places close to it, at others going up very steep rocks, and down the other side, by what would be called roads nowhere else but in China. By-and-by we got down again to

the level plains, and found that here the road was a canal. We kept along the top of the banks where possible. I read the Mongol words and phrases in Edkins' road map from 'Peking to Kiachta,' and *Eclipse of Faith*, till I fell asleep. I was awakened by shouting, and looking up, was just in time to see our chair come into violent collision with a large cart. No harm was done.

The city was visible in the distance. There were two camps outside the walls, and lower down, towards the river, a great display of flags. The city from the outside—our inn is outside—has a fine appearance. Its walls look in good repair, and are rather imposing on account of their length; perhaps it looked better on account of one whole length being seen at once. The outer part of the town has been grand in fortifications and walls in its day; but it has had its day, and these grand buildings are coming down, manifesting their greatness in their fall. The fortifications mostly seem to be giving way, and the wall *en masse* slides down a little, and reclines far enough from the perpendicular to show the good hard lime and fine workmanship in the centre of it.

Here we are, sixty li from Kalgan. We hope to get in early to-morrow; I hope we may find it quiet and less conspicuous there, i.e. soon get out of it, and away over the desert on a cheap trip. The Kiachta Russian has just come in, did not see him to-day

before, but travelled since 10.40 with Walker, who has gone on to another inn. Travelling together means seeing one another once or twice in the twenty-four hours. My luggage, I am happy to say, has always before this turned up at the inns ; it has not come in here yet. It is surely a little venturesome to let two boxes, with 50*l.* or 60*l.* in silver in them, be out of sight so long ; but I cannot help it ; the mistake was to put it in there at first. I tried on Saturday night to get it taken out, but could not without attracting attention and arousing suspicion, so it must continue as it is for another day. God has kept me so far, and given me deliverances and answers to prayer, and I think He will not desert me now. The rear mule never once lay down this afternoon, which I think is also an answer to prayer, as last night I was earnest about this matter, anticipating that if things did not mend we should not get easily to Kalgan. Blessed be God that He is my refuge and my resort, a present help in trouble, always near, able for the greatest, and willing to perform the least, since He counts the hairs of our head.

This afternoon we met immense droves of sheep on their way to Peking. Many of them were lame. They were driven by means of very long whips with heavy thongs. When occasion seemed to require it the whip was wielded with both hands, and must have had telling effect, even through the wool, which did not seem to be very thick.

Saw a party of three or four Mongols. Would that innkeeper would bring my supper, as I have been an hour here! Like Peter, I must seek to profit by the slowness of the cook.

Tuesday, August 9, 1870.—5.40–9.30: Hsüan Hua Fu to Lang Chin, thirty li. Do not think quite so much of what I saw this morning of the Fu city. The walls were not quite so well repaired towards this part. The wind also had blown the sand up very badly, which spoiled the effect. The tower at the corner we passed last was in very bad repair indeed. Roads were very bad this morning. We had a narrow escape coming over a quagmire just on coming out in the morning; it was most alarming to see how the ground trembled and shook under the feet of the donkey even as it passed before us. More canals to-day again. The road-makers are river-makers. Good seamy alluvial plain. Passed over a clump of porphyry rocks; seem to be rising every day, as I think the uphills are much more and higher than the downhills. This a wayside inn. I have no private room, but have eaten in public, and now my mule-man wants to go on.

Kalgan: arrived here about one o'clock, and found all things quiet. The Gulicks [1] had just finished dinner, but I soon came in for a second edition, which was

[1] Mr. and Mrs. Gulick were agents of the American Board of Foreign Missions, stationed at Kalgan.

first-class indeed. They have a nice quiet place here, comfortable as far as I see. It is a regular Chinese house, with courtyard in centre; they have a garden there also, luxuriant with Indian corn and willows, or some such green trees. There is a fine hill just looking down into the plain. Kalgan is indeed a fine place for hills. They seem to be all round, but I hope to climb some day soon and see more of the scenery.

Went to hunt up the Russians.[1] Had to be carried twice across a stream, which has washed away the highway to Mongolia, and threatens to wash down all that is not live rock. Found the two Kiachta men in Androniefski's house. They are not going till telegrams come, which are not due for ten days, so I suppose I am here for that length of time. It does not matter much, as all is quiet and no danger feared Androniefski is a young man, say twenty-five, was born in Irkutsk, speaks Mongol like a native, can do Chinese fluently, and makes out a little English even; he is very lively and kind. He is going to get me a cart and put me all right. He says Urga is a better place than Kiachta for the study of Mongol.

Wednesday, August 10, 1870.—Rose about six. Weather seems almost cold here. Slept under two

[1] Some Russians in Kalgan from Kiachta, and about to return; with whom Mr. Gilmour hoped to, and finally did, travel.

blankets, and was right. This morning toes are cold. If I stop here ten or twenty days I should know more Mongol, and I can live here cheaper than north, so that my money would be gathering. Camels, too, come cheaper a little later on. Praise God for all His goodness!

6 P.M. To-day at Mongolian, reading the alphabet, getting words from the teacher, and committing those and others on Edkins' road map. Four Russians called, and I could speak only Chinese and English. If I am going north I must learn some Russian, and that quickly. Thunder came on and broke up our party before tea was brought.

Thursday, August 11, 1870.—Rose 6.35. Nice and cool; did Mongolian alphabet, run short of work, and am now about to write a part of a home letter. Had Mongol teacher in afternoon, and then called on Mr. Androniefski; found his court-yard crowded with things and his house with people that had just come from Kiachta. They were bound for Tientsin, but were going to stay with him for the present. On coming home Mr. Gulick suggested that they had left Kiachta before the news of the Tientsin affair arrived, and as they have been forty days on the road it is very probable.

Kalgan is a very large town, lying alongside of a stream which threatens to wash everything away before it. It has hollowed out the mountain gorges

above Kalgan, and has attacked the suburbs. Away up the stream the view is bounded by mountains; down the stream is a wide plain, also encircled by mountains; opposite are mountains with the Great Wall running over their crests; behind are mountains, and on this side the horizon is bounded by a distant range of mountains, along which the equidistant towers of the wall can be seen dotting the horizon away into the dim distance.

Friday, August 12, 1870.—Thought much of a speedy start last night and this morning; the Russian telegrams cannot come before ten days, perhaps not for more, and when they come they may say, 'Don't come.' In that case I would be in a fix, and if I can get away alone I shall go decidedly. Called on Androniefski, who promised to see the Mongol to-day and call and report progress in the evening. It is now 6.20, and he has not come; cannot come now, as the gate would be shut in a short time, and I feel greatly annoyed and vexed at his not coming, as I think it means that I am to be detained here longer, one way or other. I feel very much annoyed, and can neither study, pray, nor do one thing or another. If we were moving on towards Kiachta, I would not care how slowly, I would be quite contented; but this helpless, handless waiting as we drift down the stream of time tries me and vexes me beyond all endurance. I had to wait nine days at Shanghai,

four or five at Tientsin, and now it seems I am to be detained for an indefinite time at Kalgan, without being able to move a finger to get myself out of it. God give me patience!

Saturday, August 13, 1870.—9 A.M. and no word of Andronieſski; I wish he would come. If he does not come, I think I shall go and call upon him again this forenoon and see what I can make of him. The people tell us that a French circus has come from Kiachta, but we don't believe it. I came here on the idea that I would not be delayed more than two days, and now departure seems quite indefinite. 4.30 P.M. Called, with Gulick, this forenoon on the Russian, and found a Mongol in waiting. Bargained with him, and found he wanted first 110 afterward 80 taels for taking me and my baggage to Urga. This would not do, so we came away. Perhaps in two weeks, says the Russian, there may be plenty of camels in the market for hire. I hope I may get away *not* later than that date.

Sabbath, August 14, 1870.—Fine clear morning. I pray that God may give me a day free from care to-day, and of rejoicing in His presence. The Lord did hear my prayer, and has quieted my mind, and enabled me to settle for the present and feel comfortable. Praise the Lord! If I would only take time to think of God's goodness and of His answers to my prayer, how happy should I be. Service at 11 A.M. in Chinese. Gulick

preached. Mission work in the lower city is stopped at present on account of the people being afraid to identify themselves with the Christians far enough to enter the chapel. Perhaps this is wise. The Christians can be taught privately without being pointed out to the public, and should the foreigners have to leave, the less conspicuous the Christians, the less persecution will they have to bear.

Monday, August 15, 1870.—Nice clear morning. If I cannot get away soon I almost think of taking up my abode in a lama temple some two days out of Kalgan on the road to Kiachta. I could, perhaps, be there a while, and when war came start over the plateau, without coming into Kalgan at all.

Rouenoff, the Russian, called and offered me a cart. His interpreter told me of some four or five camels that want a return cargo to Kiachta; I hope they may come. In evening went down with the Gulicks to the lower city. People friendly and curious; was allowed to enter a mosque with new boots on! The Gulicks were visiting sick people. All seems quiet here; praise the Lord! Amen. Heard on Saturday that France and Russia are at war! If this be true, it will probably delay the settlement of the Tientsin affair. I am not at all astonished now at the story of the old Mexicans keeping records by means of knotted cords. The Mongol writing seems to be borrowed from that

practice. It would be quite possible, I think, to devise a system of knots that would be quite as readable as the Mongol character. To look at a Mongol word, it looks exactly like a knotted cord.

Tuesday, August 16, 1870.—Rose 6 A.M.; clear and cool. Wonder if that Mongol will turn up to-day, and if I shall be able to come to terms with him? Went to the lower city: found all quiet. In afternoon letters came from Peking not at all reassuring. Visited two Russians in the afternoon; drank the regulation tea. Postmaster expects letters to-day or to-morrow, to say when he is to go. Two others are going with him. He says he has engaged camels to Urga at twenty taels for a cart, ten for a load. I should like to go with him. Saw the manager of the circus, which *has* arrived; he is French, and speaks English a little. Kiachta, he says, was a fine place—plenty of money. At Urga he built a cirque, and the mandarins forbade the Tartars to come to the place! He was about fifty days in the desert, and had about fifty camels. He wants to get to Shanghai.

Thursday, August 18, 1870.—Dull and cool; rose 6 A.M. Must try and go on with Mongol. 7.30. Just finished my letters, and was about to have devotions, when a Mongol came and offered to take me to Urga for fifty taels. This is the kind of interruption that disturbs quiet study. In a short time he came

again, saying he would take me for forty, and start at once. Gulick was finishing his meal, so we agreed to speak of it after breakfast. After breakfast we talked over the matter. It was seemingly all right, when in came the Mongol I could not arrange with yesterday. I felt that they wanted to take me. They were for writing the contract at once, but we said we would go and see about the cart first. They objected, and said Urga fashion was for the man to write the contract in his own house. We saw they did not want us to go to the Russians. I said if they wanted us to write the contract here we would come back. Meantime, they were to wait till we rode up and back again. As we got to the Russians' house we saw the Mongol after us. We spoke about the cart, started to see it, while Gulick slipped off to the postmaster's to see if he had ordered my cart. Gulick came back laughing from ear to ear, saying that the Mongol had followed him, and was the same man who was taking postmaster in a few days for thirty taels, making the passage in twenty-two days, whereas I was to be thirty days! The postmaster had told the Mongol of me and bespoken camels. The man had come down to try and get ten taels out of me. He would have started me to-morrow or the day following, and walked slowly till the postmaster's caravan came up with me, and we would have entered Urga together, *I* paying ten taels more and being eight days longer on

the road! I always heard the Mongols were simple, but this fellow seems to be up to a thing or two.

Friday, August 19, 1870.—Fine weather as usual. Went in afternoon to the top of the hills to the west of our place. Bird-catcher up there. Came to the old wall of China. Built here of stone; mud ridge in the centre, but does not rise high. Broad at the base, narrows to a point at the top. Parts fallen down. Alas! the labour spent in vain! Fine view of Kalgan and surrounding places. Came down by the Russian valley. Mongol teacher put on my sea-boots, wrong feet, and stalked about, saying he was English.

Saturday, August 20, 1870.—Rose 6.25; fine clear morning. I think of going off to the hills to shout Mongol, as I must be disturbing people here. 1 P.M. Just returned from chasing the Great Wall over hill and dale. Here it is built of stone, and in some places is in perfect repair, with even the lime on the top all right. In many places it has crumbled down. The towers are in a bad state generally. It is alarming to think of the labour expended on this wall. Mongols in town seem more numerous; people quiet and respectful. Heard a beggar singing a song which went to an air that much resembled the trip of a negro melody.

6.20 P.M. Just returned from visiting the circus. They have had no answer from Peking, though ten

days have passed since the writing of their letter. They give a very alarming report of the state of matters in Urga. There is an Englishman among them who asked for books. We must try to hunt up some for him.

Went in the afternoon with Mr. Thomson to a smith's shop to get some silver cut up. He had a piece of silver of about fifty taels. First came the bargaining as to how much the smith would do it for. He asked a hundred, but consented to eighty cash. The lump of silver was then placed in the fire and made red-hot. Then three men flew at it on the anvil with three great hammers, and by repeated heatings and severe hammering got it flattened out. It was then cut into oblongs and cooled; the hammer finally severed the parts. My little eight-tael piece came next, and was treated in the same way for fifty cash. Peking mail came in to-day; nothing for me, as I am supposed to be in the desert. More news of Tientsin; nothing definite yet.

Monday, August 22, 1870.—Rose 5.20; cool, dull. Wonder when I shall get away. Is there any danger from the disturbances in the North? I try to leave all these things for God's disposal, knowing that if He wills He can keep me safe, and that if He does not keep me all is vain. Since I have done all I can about camels, and have failed, I believe it is God's will that I should wait a little. How long?

In place of hurrying on the men who are coming before we can go, I think it better to tell God my case, and ask Him to arrange it all, and hedge up my way so that I cannot leave the right path, and also to spur me on, so that I may not be in danger of lagging behind through idleness.

Had a good morning at Mongol. Thunder came on at 12 noon. Hurried away to go to the circus with books, but turned at the gate on account of threatening rain. Bought apples, came back, and found that no rain came just then. Visited the circus with *Spectator* and four *Shanghai Weekly Heralds*. Learn that the secretary of the French Legation is coming up to take the circus through. Letters of an alarming nature from Peking this evening. Things look worse at Tientsin, and Stanley urges the Americans to evacuate Tientsin.

Tuesday, August 23, 1870.—Rose 6 A.M.; cool clear morning. What tides and fluctuation there are in men's minds at present! Last night, before Stanley's letters came, we were almost sorry that we had written to friends in an alarming strain. After reading Stanley's letter we were glad we had done it; after reading one which had come from Dr. Blodget the old calm feeling came back again, and we went to bed in the belief that there was to be no disturbance till spring. I thought this was the general conclusion, and so wrote letters to go with a

helper who was going to Peking on some business. This morning at breakfast I find that the tide has set in the other way again, and that the Gulicks meditate a speedy departure for the North. So much have their plans changed, that I am not sure my letters go at all in the meantime. Things are quiet here, but not settled. May my mind be kept in perfect peace because I trust in God, and may God help me to go on with study even in these distracting excitements.

Yesterday, when the Peking letters came, Mr. Thomson left his silver out, and found that one flake of about two taels has disappeared. He thought that another piece had been substituted for it, and that made it difficult for us to fix suspicion on anyone. The boys in this establishment could not have silver in their possession. On another inspection it was discovered that no piece was substituted. Russians called about eleven o'clock, and while they were in the Gulicks instituted a search—it was commenced before they came—and found the missing silver in the cook's box, along with a silver-plated teaspoon which had disappeared before. The spoon was hammered till it broke enough to be evident that it was only plated. Suspicion pointed to this boy about a year ago, but no proof could be adduced. The Gulicks are intent on giving him a chance of redeeming his character. As Mrs. Gulick had taken care to lock the gate when the search commenced, he could

not get away: he tried to. After a time he broke down and wept, and at present he is still where he was.

Russian postmaster did not expect to go before fourteen days. I did not hear this till he had left. In the evening I went up to the circus people, and was told that the French secretary and a mandarin from Peking had arrived to take the circus through. It is hoped that this act of the Government may have a good effect on the people here at present. I was very much cast down in spirit about waiting two weeks longer, when the circus Englishman told me the new postmaster had come in that afternoon, and showed me the carts. I called for the postmaster; he was out—his men said he was out, but that they were going in about three to five days. So I am glad after all that I did not break the bargain again. The Mongols were there on the alert. This I regard as another of the many answers I have received to prayer. This morning I prayed specially for this man's speedy arrival, and here he is on the afternoon of the very same day. Praise God for His goodness!

5 P.M. Visited the Russian postmaster this afternoon. He goes on Sabbath; I go on Saturday, and wait up at the edge of the desert for him. Bought tin goods, 270 cash. A horse came, and on looking at it we discovered it was the same that had been offered at forty dollars in the morning! Mr. Thomson,

as before, offered fifteen dollars; some speaking ensued, and he rose to eighteen. The men went off in high dudgeon, naming, however, twenty-five dollars. After a time they returned, offering it at twenty dollars; but Thomson was firm. Later on, and in the dark, they sent in to ask if he would not give eighteen and a half, but still he was firm, and so the thing ended for the night; the buying of a horse could not be settled on account of a matter of 500 cash.

Thursday, August 25, 1870.—To-day have done almost nothing. In the morning Mr. Thomson was going away; he started about ten or eleven o'clock. Then the man came with my oatmeal. Then dinner; and that was late on account of the number of Chinese visitors who crowded the house. In the afternoon the Russian postmaster called, and talking with him took up a time. In the evening I went out to buy things, and now I am waiting tea, which is thus late.

Friday, August 26, 1870.—Had a busy and bothersome day of it, arranging and fixing matters; think it is almost all over now. Went up with my boxes in the evening; called on Ruenoff and his conpadore.

Saturday, August 27, 1870.—5 P.M. We are at a roadside inn, the horses being fed, the carter drinking tea. We have thirty li to go yet, and don't get to the place we should have reached after all. We did not start till 1.30 P.M. in place of 7 or 8 A.M. as should

have been the case. The cart did not come for me, so, as soon as I was quite ready, I hired a cart, and came up to the postmaster's. I found the Mongols all busy, but far from ready. Put my things into my cart, and waited in it until at last we did start. Meantime, talked with the circus men. I feel much condemned at the thought that I did not take that Englishman and assault his soul. I ought to have done it; I am sorry I did not. God forgive me, and help me to lose fewer opportunities. The baggage-train of our party has just passed, and is raising a cloud of dust in the distance. They are singing after their fashion, and the head man has left his party to drink tea with us here. His camel is hard by.

Sabbath, August 28, 1870.—Awoke about 5 A.M. just as it was drawing towards light, and saw that we were right out into the plain. There is a Mongol abode near us, of three tents, and away forward a little is Tau tai Miau, a temple that looks well in the distance. Took a walk up a hill, keeping in sight of the cart. Had peripatetic devotions. Came back, cooked breakfast, and washed, and now I am writing up my diary with a lot of people looking into my cart. I have just given them a Mongol catechism, and I hope it may do them good. God, do Thou bless it to them! Would I could speak to them, but I cannot. I am glad to be saved the trouble of

travelling to-day. My mind feels at rest for the present. I am looking about me, and having my first look at the life I am likely to lead. There are several more Mongol dwellings within sight; plenty of camels, horses, and oxen. The Mongols have a tent of their own, and the 'commandant's' tent has also been put up. This, taken with the fact that the camels have gone off to graze, looks as if we were not to travel to-day, but wait till posty comes up.

A Mongol has just come up and changed his dress, his cloak serving him as a tent meantime. I am hesitating whether to try to read in my cart, or go off a little way with my plaid and umbrella. Had not a very intellectual or spiritual day after all. Went in the afternoon away to the east. Had a good view and a time of devotion at a cairn from which an eagle arose as I approached. Returned to the camp, and bought milk and sour cheese. Intended to make porridge, but the fire was not good on account of the blowing, so I drank off my milk, ate some bread, and went to sleep. About 10 P.M. I was aroused by some one calling me. Rose, and found it was Androniefski, who had come with the postmaster escorting him, and looking out for shooting. There are also two or three more Kalgan Russians with them after shooting.

Monday, August 29, 1870.—After leaving the inn from which I wrote on Saturday, we came to a

closing up of the ravine. I saw no way out of it, but rising dust indicated that the path lay over the mountain in front of us. We were coming to the Hiugan Mountains and pass, marked in the map as 5,400 feet above sea-level. We went on as rapidly as possible, but not rapidly enough for me. The sun was near setting, and I was anxious to have the view which so many people speak so much of when they find themselves lifted above the plain. Just as we came close to the foot of the real ascent, we came upon long trains of ox-carts coming down laden with nitron. The pass is single-file breadth, and our course was delayed by train after train of these waggons coming down. The only way was for me to run up and stop the train at convenient places, to let my cart come up step by step.

Got up at last, but when the summit was gained darkness had fallen over the landscape, so that sight is still in store for me. We went on in the dark swiftly, I thinking that every light I saw would be the inn at which we were to stop; but one light after another we passed, till at length we left the road, dogs barked, the cart stopped, and we were at our Mongol encampment. Just before I had been thinking of the nice hot things I should call for at the inn, and had resolved on them, when all at once I was set down on the desert beside a tent half put up, and a fire that would not light

I walked about for a time, and at last saw a fire lighted up in the commandant's tent! The Cossack grew remorseful about smoking his master out before he got into his new abode, and dragged the fire outside, thus extinguishing the whole affair. It was soon lighted again and put all right. We gathered round to see the Cossack cook his supper. It was meat and rice cooked together. The meat is eaten with a knife. The lump is taken hold of with the hand, then seized with the teeth, and the knife like a flash cuts it off close to the mouth. The Englishman of the circus described it truly when he said, 'You would think he meant to cut off his nose.' Afterwards I made tea, and devoured half of a chicken, and went to bed.

Sabbath was spent by the Mongols in rearranging baggage, putting things on the cart, and trying how the various camels would draw. We had a most beauteous sunset. We had sky and cloud, tint and shade, red and lots of colours. One most effective thing was a shower that came towards us from sunset, and that was red down to the top of the hill that made our horizon.

This morning the Mongols were astir before daylight, and I thought they meant to start at once. But tea was made at a slow fire, various cookings went on, and now, 8.15 A.M., we are just loading the groaning camels. These creatures do make a most

hideous noise when they are being loaded. They look about and give vent to another expression of dissatisfaction as each bundle is put on. As soon as they start they are silent, and do very well indeed. It is a slow and troublesome business to get started, though the Mongols are deft at their work. Most of our camels are now loaded, and the sportsmen have gone on in front to get game for us.

This morning I was on a hill to see sunrise; it was grand! Went to a stream and washed. Came back and saw a Mongol breakfast. It consisted of tea, boiled in a greasy pot, and oatmeal. The meal was put into a bowl, and a ladleful of tea poured on it. The tea was drunk off, and the dough licked up with the tongue. Then more tea added, and tea-drinking and licking repeated. The camels are declaiming loudly against their treatment, and rising when they should not, and attempting to roll over on their burdens. Mongol knives are most formidable things; they are long and business-looking, and have the depression along the blade like the sword. The Cossack was chopping wood this morning with his sword!

9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Started, but had great bother with the postmaster's harness; it was new rope, and not pliable enough; it came off frequently. In about an hour and a half got into a good pace, the whole party mounted. About 2 P.M. a halt was

called, and we encamped. Boiling water was procured, and we had tea. Shortly after, some change of opinion pervaded, and we set about dinner. The four huntsmen joined us, Andronicfski having brought down four birds, the others none. We had a good time together till the sportsmen had to leave; Andronicfski, being mounted, left later. We did Russian and English together, and he left after sunset. We started at 8 P.M. and travelled continuously till 4.15 A.M. next morning—that is, more than eight hours. Dogs began to bark, and we were aware that we were near Mongol huts. Slept till near sunrise, when people came about, from whom I got some Mongol words.

Tuesday, August 30, 1870.—Took a long walk. Came back; made porridge and tea for breakfast. Started at 9 A.M. and travelled till 12 noon, when we encamped by the side of a little valley or depression that ends itself by running down into a small lake. Felt very sleepy this morning; slept an hour and a half, and was not worth much the other hour and half. The commandant has gone off with his gun, and I have heard two shots. 5 P.M. to 1 A.M. A good walk. I slept great part of the dark time. Fine scenery at sunset.

Wednesday, August 31, 1870.—Was awakened by the commandant asking me to drink tea; got up, found it was about 5 A.M. Made porridge, tea, and

partook of a part of an old hen, the present of the postmaster on Monday. It is now about 7 A.M. Heavy Scotch mist clearing off. Just starting.

6.50 A.M. to 12.40 P.M. Richer country, horses, one long, wide wave of country after another. Camels groaning badly, soon start.

5.15 P.M. to 2.25 A.M. Long but not very good walk, frequent stoppages this morning, good grass but bad argols.[1] Could scarcely get my porridge made, did get on at last, and feel all right.

Thursday, September 1, 1870.—Yesterday afternoon, as we were starting, the commandant brought down five good-sized wild ducks out of a flock of eight. I changed places with the Cossack, and rode his camel for more than two hours. It is not difficult to do, and the pace of the camel does not disturb me much. Slept very badly last night, and afraid I must suffer for it to-day. We have a good strong wind with us. If it were against us, we would feel cold.

8.10 A.M. to 2.30 P.M. Long and good walk. Commandant brought in another large duck. Latter part of the road rough, over a hill, past the Gyrgelu Rocks—at least, so I take it. Encamped by a well, but could not get any but bad argols, and these with trouble. Thought I would be beaten in cooking dinner, succeeded and well; invited to the commandant's dinner on the strength of his ducks, and

[1] Camel dung, used as fuel.

did them justice. In the desert stomach is expansive and contracting according to circumstances.

These long walks in daylight are not profitable; in about four hours the camels get displeased, their loads disarranged, one breaks loose, another lies down, and the sixth hour is more trouble than the other five. But these long stages are done, I suppose, to get from one water to another, and save the trouble of carrying it.

Little study can be done in travelling here. Camping time is taken up almost wholly in cooking and eating, washing, and perhaps going to a hilltop or writing a little in a diary. Part of the light travelling time is taken up with sleeping, as rest is usually broken at night by travelling. Then, again, there are numerous instances when it is necessary to jump off and walk, or perhaps assist in some critical case. There are four Mongols, one a girl, and seventeen camels with one horse. The Cossack mounts a camel, and takes care of that; each of the three cart-camels requires constant leading. We should have another Mongol, in fact. There is the commandant and his wife, and four children. There is also a little dog, which mounts with the Cossack. An old cat and a young one ride in the carts. Some hens, whose lives and misery have been prolonged by the sacrifice of the ducks, remind me to enumerate them in the list. They emit a feeble cackling, as is consistent with a

ife in a coop above a cart in the desert. The cavalcade consists, then, of: seventeen camels, one horse, four Mongols, three Russians, four Russ children, one Scotchman, one dog, two cats, hens decreasing.

6.15 P.M. to 2.30 A.M. Long walk, pretty good. Clouds and wind behind us. Lanterns expired all over, and what matter, for my camel leader slept almost all night. Several times he fell forward and lay, but never fell off, and the camels stopped. I got up and at him with my stick. Part of the road not good. Commandant asked to get out and walk; rattled his bottles first. Came to camping ground about the above time.

Friday, September 2, 1870.—9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Long cold walk in the rain; no rain now, but clouds and cold. Water and argols slow in coming. Water and argols came at last, but the water was bad, and had to be sent for again. I now set to work on my dinner, but the wind went down and almost defeated me, as I had set up my fire to suit the wind which was blowing strongly then. It was dark by the time we finished dinner and cleared away, and the rain was on before we could start. Yet two Mongols went on wet and weary though they must have been, singing away over the bleak expanse of the raining Gobi. The singing was put on, I think; the rain soon washed it off. Not only did it cease, but the march also, and we drew up shortly after starting. I went off to

sleep again, to the tune of the Mongols driving in the wooden pegs to secure their tent.

Saturday, September 3, 1870.—At daybreak this morning I found the Mongols packing to go without breakfast. I looked out and saw the tents where we got water and fuel last night distant about 1½ mile; still they would go, anxious, I suppose, to secure a start before the rain comes on again. Everything has the appearance of more rain. The sky is a dull leaden expanse, which may come down in rain or clear off, we don't know which. This is scarcely Gobi yet, but it is surely the preparation for it. The soil is poor and sandy, the vegetation is dry-looking and thin. Perhaps last night's rain may do it good. It is quite providential that last night I boiled an extra stock of jerked beef and saved a bottle of good tea. This with bread may make a put-off till a more formal meal comes to hand.

5 A.M. to 11 A.M. nearly. Sufficiently miserable this morning; everything wet, cold, damp. One camel (commandant's cart) gave in, and could hardly be thrashed along; waited for it. Roads excessively bad. Small hare chased by four men, one horse, one dog; double-barrelled gun fired, no effect, long chase, and dog brought it up at last. Chase did us all good, poor hare alone excepted. Mongol horseman in at the death, one stirrup came off! Encamped beside a lake, and lots of carts also. About one hundred

camels at grass coming up in night to drink at the lake. High drying wind now, hanging out all our things. Drying nicely. Many skeletons of oxen lying about to-day. I set up my pot on three vertebræ, and it did nicely. Fried two oatmeal cakes, as I had no porridge this morning. I regard the cake system as a means of eating oatmeal raw. My pot is becoming too small for me! This is Gobi, and a fine place it is in a wet morning. It is a good deal better now Sang Scotch psalms and paraphrases this morning, and cheered on the camel.

Bad walk. Constant interruptions and stoppages till at last we squatted down right on the road where we were in the sand. We have fifty li of bad road in this place, and till we pass it there is no peace to us. It is sand drifted (?) from higher ground, and makes a wretched road. One of the commandant's carts seems to be heavier than the others, and constantly sticks.

Sabbath, September 4, 1870.—5 A.M. to 12 noon. Very bad road. Sand wheels sinking. Road better now, and to be better, we are told, further on. Encamped in a very desert place, but with huts all about at wide distances. Sheep farmers here, I think, but miserably poor. Bones of oxen lying scattered about, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. Cold, changed my light things for warm, and put on underclothing. Don't like Sabbath travel-

ling. Had a good time of it, however, and prayed a good deal for absent ones. At first I kept away from the carts, but seeing one of the camels distressed, I began to question whether it would not be more of the Christian spirit to go and assist. Went and assisted.

Had a bad night of it last night with colic and diarrhœa. Better now. Took brandy. How am I to get these poor people told of Christ and His love to them? I suppose I must go about the desert, and search out the lost sheep. God help me. Amen.

5 P.M. to 1 A.M. Good walk; roads much better. Went spanking along in the moonlight merrily. Fished out my tremendous great-coat, and slept in it. Feet cold.

Monday, September 5, 1870.—Awoke before daylight, and found that the Mongols were stirring. Looked out and saw most of the burdens on the camels! So, then, they mean to go at once and without breakfast, thus reducing the one-meal-a-day habit to a system! Beautiful red along the horizon.

5 A.M. to 11. Felt out of sorts this morning. Perhaps it was nothing more than ill temper at being done out of breakfast. The land was but thinly inhabited. Large droves of horses, some herds of cattle, some camels, and plenty of sheep. The land very level and wide-lying. Now we have got to a well, about which is a great concourse of cattle. We

have sent for water, but it has not come yet. Read this morning about Elisha, and also the *Eclipse of Faith.* I don't like this one-meal-a-day system, but perhaps we travel all the quicker on account of it. I wish the water would come. I am afraid that this system will tell heavily on my boho-bag. The mirage is playing its pranks here, though the heat is not at all great.

At the well there is an encampment of carts. A company of camels have just come in the opposite direction from us. There are two companies of carts, and some mounted shepherds are driving their sheep to the well, some are driving them from it. What a time that water is in coming! That girl must be flirting with the shepherds. Did it never occur to you that while all the fine flirtation mentioned in Genesis was going on at the well old Laban was fuming for his supper? N.B.—Don't send Rebecca again for water to a busy well. There seems to be great trouble at the well to keep the flocks and herds distinct.

Made and ate breakfast and dinner together. Bottled up tea. After dinner visited the company with camels. Found about twenty camels, two Chinamen, and about four Mongols going with a lot of general merchandise to Kalgan. They were twenty-six days from Urga. Evidently they did not travel quite so smartly as we; they came almost at

the same time with us, and we were off long before them.

4.20 P.M. to 3.35 A.M. Long, rapid, and successful walk over good level hard roads. We have thus travelled 17¼ hours out of the 24, counting from daylight to daylight, which is the proper way to reckon a desert day. The last few li the road line is sandy but level, and the sand is not deep. The moon is fine to travel by just now. A good many tents after leaving yesterday's encampment. Good many in view here also. Gobi is more regularly inhabited than some other parts of the desert that have better grass and pasture. Why is this? Had water for tea this morning; plenty of fuel, but the buckets leaked and we had tea only, which was immensely good on this cold morning. Saw frost yesterday morning, but did not awake early enough to see it this morning.

7.30 A.M. to 12.12 P.M. Good walk, though slow a little. Came upon a wide valley with a salt lake in it; water dried up and a great many companies getting salt. Met some carts of salt just left for Kalgan. Commandant and I started for game, but found none. Had a bad creak in one shoulder early this morning. Slept on the other side, and got it in the other shoulder. Made dinner, and forgot them both. Took breakfast and dinner together to-day. No water here, and buckets let out mostly the half

of their contents. I have worked on short allowance, and am not sure whether I can get enough for tea without robbing the commandant's children. A great many ox skeletons.

Tuesday, September 6, 1870.—Going about to-day, we are told that a disease carried off all the cattle, and therefore we can get no milk. With the exception of draught cattle, I think we have seen only two cows to-day.

Admire the manner in which the Mongol mends his saddle-girth. He takes some hair from his horse's tail and makes a band of it! The girth is a plaited camel's hair rope. Frequently girths are made of plaited thongs, which are very hard in the edges and sore on the animal. A crupper is not worn; in place of it a girth goes back over the belly, and is strapped tight. Almost any animal that has been ridden bears traces of these straps by white lines where the straps have been.

4.40 P.M. to 3.30 A.M. Long and good walk over a high tableland. Country formed for great part at first by stratified rocks on edge. Road a little rough in consequence. Afterwards came stones; this morning we are in a granite boulder country. Last night in the moonlight we passed numerous lakes. Little lakes are the characteristic formation of this part. They are mere hollows in the rock, just as we see little cups of water in rocks at the tops of mountains.

Commandant brought in a duck last night from one of these lakelets after sunset. He is washing his gun this morning, evidently intent on further murder. This morning at daylight found that there was good water, argols plenty. I was glad. Yesterday I made my tea of muddy water. How thankful we become for our customary mercies when we are deprived of them for a little! Health too, and freedom from pain, we never think (hardly) of these things till they are taken from us. My little stiff neck opens my eyes of thankfulness to thousands of mercies sparing me from thousands of distresses. I find myself in much better humour this morning, having had porridge and tea. I find that for my character as a pleasant travelling companion I had better keep my distance from the others on the one-meal days till I have had that one meal.

8.30 A.M. to 1.10 P.M. Good walk. Saw another temple. They are visible at great distances. Crossed another salt valley, small, went to the dried-up lake, and saw how the salt protrudes itself from the ground so that it can be gathered free from soil. Road has gravel, bad for camel's feet. There are four or five huts in the hollow where we now are, some camels, sheep, and some goats, which last have taken possession of a small hillock a little way ahead of us. Water, as usual, a long time in coming. Perhaps, though, it has to come a long way, as

the man and camel have gone down out of sight.

4.45 P.M. to 2.30 A.M. Our head man left us after dinner. We were short of a man before, now we are short of two men. This was a long walk, good moonlight, but much interrupted by camels breaking loose ; and then who was to put them right ? Some trees seen here. Good breakfast by a well, plenty of fuel.

Thursday, September 8, 1870.—7 A.M. to 12 noon. We are come at last, after many vexatious stoppages, through camels coming loose, and no one to put them right, to a pretty decent valley. At the well here we are going to get milk. To-day passed several trees in (cart just knocked down from its stand) a curious bed. They were to appearance not good for much. Bark very thick and rough indeed.

Was sleeping about 9 A.M. in cart, turned and looked out, saw commandant going towards two little flags that fluttered a little way from the road ; he waved, and I followed. We found the corpse of a Mongol laid out on the bare ground. The body had no covering but a piece of paper over the face, and a large piece inscribed in the Tibetan character, coming from the shoulders to the knees. The body was not 'laid out,' but left in the posture the deceased had been in at the moment of death, legs doubled and crossed, arms crossed. To all appearance the

body had not been out long, perhaps a day, or two at most. The paper that fluttered about was not destroyed much. The body for the most part promised not to corrupt. The person had been old and shrivelled, and the wind and sun were completing what old age had begun, and converting the body into a mummy until such time as rain should come, or wild beasts and birds make havoc of it. It was still untouched. There were two cloth flags on a small staff, both pieces, one white, one a faded yellow, covered with dimly inscribed Tibetan characters. There were also little cones of a dull yellowish substance placed on stones at regular distances around. These cones also bore Tibetan characters.

Dined on millet boiled with stewed fruit. Commandant says he can get neither meat nor milk in this Gobi. After all, was it not rather a bad lot of it these Israelites had in the desert so long without their leeks and flesh pots? Commandant also says this is halfway to Urga, and that to-morrow we are to have fresh camels. To make this arrangement, I suppose, our head man left us yesterday.

A great bulky rock here, which the sea evidently found much harder to wear down than the rest of the country. Huts here, one halfway up the rock quite picturesque.

5.40 P.M. to 1.40 A.M. Long walk in beautiful full moonlight. Two hours after starting we passed

a part with wells, roads bad, rough and sand; got through it with some difficulty, and came away on. Our three men did as well as they could, but that was only three men's best in place of five.

While taking in water at the well, a great herd of camels came walking down upon us to see what was up. I started out and drove them off. They were led by one large one; they are timid, and make a stampede directly when any demonstration is made against them.

As we walked in the dark, or light rather, commandant told me that to-morrow we come to a Miao, where are many Mongol priests, and where we get fresh camels for the remainder of our journey to Kurin. The six or seven camel-loads of provisions which we are taking up with us are for the temple, so that there we get rid of our large train, and, being reduced to more moderate size, we hope to get on faster. The saving of time will be in loading and herding, and the shorter the train the fewer the breaks likely to occur in it.

As we came to our encampment last night, our men left my cart turned partly to the wind. It was about 2 A.M., and that I might get four hours' good rest I got out and myself turned the cart round. I was not long inside again when I heard the people come and take the cart to turn it round! Turn it round they did, and I had to get out and make them

turn it back again. I was highly satisfied that I was able to wind up the whole affair by pronouncing the Mongol word for *ass*, though, as Mongolia has no asses, I am in doubt as to whether they understand that as a term of reproach.

Friday, September 9, 1870.—Had a good sleep, and awoke to find ourselves quite in a desert place. On examining the buckets found great part of the water gone. There was still enough left to make tea, and our valiant Cossack in the process lost a good quantity of it by the upsetting of a pot. We all drank tea, however, though no attempt was made at a formal breakfast. The Mongols drank tea over oatmeal. These people live hard. I cannot do it yet; raw oatmeal does not digest, simply passes through the stomach much as it was.

7.7 A.M. to 4.30 P.M. We are told that the temple was not far off, and started in that hope over dale after dale. About noon the temple was still not visible, and the camels began to get troublesome. There were only two Mongols now—the girl and the old man—to put things right. The camels had not been allowed sufficient water last night. It was pitiful to see how every one of them strained last night to reach the water when we were filling our buckets, but no water was given to the poor creatures. To-day was hot beyond usual, and we were passing over mile after mile of the untouched desert pasture

land, wondering if it would ever come to an end. The Mongols themselves did not seem to know very much about it. The camels sometimes lay down, and we were not in the best of humours, having only a limited allowance of tea for breakfast. Gaining a height, the Miao was visible at immense distance on the very other side of the wave of desert on which we were just entering. The mirage also played all manner of freaks on it, and we faced away towards it not in the best frame of mind. Antelopes seen to-day in great number; none came within range. After a long time came to a hut and filled a bottle of their tea, drank it, and think was never so much refreshed by tea in my life.

Came to our anchorage near the temple; found fresh camels, milk, and mutton. Argols and water in abundance. I made porridge. Went up and had a distant view of the Miao. It seems small. Think there can't be over 100 people about it altogether. The great full moon rose as the sun set. The missing camel came in about an hour after sunset. Our new camels are tied to a rope along the ground all ready for us. Drank tea with commandant, and made a desperate attempt at conversation. Went to bed, leaving the Mongols getting up a feast in a full pot.

Saturday, September 10, 1870.—5 A.M. to 9.30 A.M Took in water and set off. We are to have two men

to take us to Urga. One, an old man and servant, evidently made frequent applications to the arika[1] bottle which was deposited in my pots and pans basket at the front of my cart. We stopped, and were hammering the commandant's threatening wheel when our old governor and our new one overtook us. The old man of the arika forthwith struck up a rebellion, and seating himself on the ground talked loudly, fast, and incessantly, the burden of his speech being, I am told, that he refused to go any further. The new governor took the reins and led away, leaving the old governor to bring the drunken man to his senses. He joined us by-and-by, and not long after fell from his camel, hurting the back of his head. He gradually got out of his fuddle, and now is lying sleeping among the luggage, the new governor having gone I know not whither. I have taken possession of the objectionable bottle, and placed it at the back of the cart, where there is no danger of his getting it.

2.40 P.M. to 1.40 A.M. Struck away across the desert. Dull, but no rain. No huts visible. Partridges, but killed none. Beautiful by moonlight. Full moon. Struck the road 8.10 P.M. Fine smooth and partly level road. Walked an hour or two at different times. Felt happy in spirit. Sang Scotch psalms and paraphrases. Came upon a log and

[1] A kind of spirits.

wheels; thought it a tent. Encamped by a well. Beautiful moon.

Sabbath, September 11, 1870.—Astir by daybreak. Camels watering; made porridge and tea. This is the Lord's day. Help me, O Lord, to be in the Spirit and to be glad and rejoice in the day which Thou hast made. Several huts in sight. When shall I be able to speak to the people? O Lord, suggest by the Spirit how I should come among them, and guide me in gaining the language, and in preparing myself to teach the life and love of Christ Jesus. Oh, let me live for Christ, and feel day by day the blessedness of a will given up to God, and the happiness of a life which has its every circumstance working for my good. Amen.

7.15 A.M. to 12.15 P.M. Good swift walk across the shallow broad valley. 10 A.M. We are at the well on the other side, and taking water into our useless buckets; Mongols caulking them. Good many huts here. Numerous skeletons of oxen lying about close to the well. In some instances parts of the flesh have not decayed, but become dried meat. They are perhaps draught oxen, as the shoes remain on the feet of some to this day. The land we passed over is almost wholly barren. It is a mouldy sand, and it is strange that that low-lying part should be more barren than the hills or rising ground on either side. The mirage in all its glory. Dined on the ridge

of that long land-wave, the trough of which we were crossing for five hours to-day and an hour or two last night, or this morning rather. Reading Bible and Addison on Milton. Short of water to-day, of course, as we are not at a well, but got on nicely. The plain is lively here with the chirruping of a kind of grasshopper, which makes a noise with the voice of a rat and the note of a nightingale. Thus God is praised even on the desolate plain of the desert of Gobi.

4.15 P.M. to 12.45 A.M. Slept till sunset, and after that again till 8.30 P.M. After that drank tea, ate rusks, got out and walked, rejoicing in the light of the full moon. Came upon three or four encampments of carts about 10 P.M. There must have been several hundreds of carts. There was an immense fire blazing away in the midst between (two?) encampments. The light made it cheerful, notwithstanding the full moon. Camped at 1 A.M. at a small lake and well.

Monday, September 12, 1870.—Got up by moonlight and set to breakfast; light soon came, and there came defiling down by the side of the lake over the hill on the other side from us say 150 carts. There are several huts here, and the country last night was more or less inhabited. There are great stones and rocks cropping out of the ground, over some of which I saw the commandant's cart go last night. There is some prospect of milk here to-day.

7.15 A.M. to 11.25 A.M. Good swift walk. First part of the road excessively bad with stones, latter part smooth and sandy. Met several companies of camels to-day. Two wells here; one fallen in, the other built up largely with ox skulls, horns and all. Got a little milk here, milked my bottle of tea, and made a compound of milk and flour. Intend to read *Eclipse of Faith* again. To-day cleared out my cart.

4.30 P.M. to 12.30 A.M. Good walk, but did not see much of it. Had a chase after a Will-o'-wisp, which turned out to be a fire in a tent; returned in time to escape the dogs, which soon opened on us. Camel of the commandant's cart much distressed at last.

Tuesday, September 13, 1870.—Awoke about 2 A.M., when my cart went down. The Mongols had been moving and speaking a few minutes before, but when called to now were quiet and fast asleep. By-and-by I heard the noise of a camel being thrashed, and in came our Mongol with water. I called him, but of course he could not hear, so I took him by the sleeve and brought him to me and made him set up the cart, and again made him put stones to the wheel; failing to do this did all the mischief, and if they go on neglecting this they will break my cart-shafts before we get to Urga. Scarcity of water this morning; camel drank up a pailful, and got what was

profitable for its doctrine, correction, and instruction.

8.5 A.M. to 12.40 P.M. Good walk. Came upon large encampment of carts at 9 A.M. Shortly after had an adventure with Mongol dog. It came barking at a safe distance, and I gave it a stone that sent it howling home. The plain may be said to be over now. Mountains rise in the distance; not far off is a good range. There is a stretch of plain visible yet, but it is between hills and mountains. Here we have hills and rocks, though not high. Commandant says we leave Gobi to-morrow night.

4.45 P.M. to 10.30 P.M. Passed some very large rocks about sunset. Gathered a fragrant shrub, low-growing, very like our 'Apple ringy' or Southernwood at home. Wind blowing hard about 10 P.M.; suspect that was the reason that we came to anchor so soon.

Wednesday, September 14, 1870.—Awoke this morning after a fine sleep and found that it was 6 A.M. The tents were up, the fireplace dug, and all ready for the water. Our Mongol was away for that. We are beside a lake as usual. There is one tent, from which we got fuel, and a large cart encampment not far from us. A cart and some camels came over the hill some time after; supposed to be a Chinaman inside.

8 A.M. to 12.30 P.M. Commandant brought in a

duck soon after we started, and later a waterfowl. There were three or four encampments of carts in place of one, as I saw from a hill soon after starting. We are not going on the road now, but are taking a short cut through the country. Bought a sheep to-day for three roubles. Encamped by a well where there was plenty of argol fuel left by some former camel encampment. Spiritually and intellectually in a low state.

3.30 P.M. to 10 P.M. Fine walk through a nice undulating country; tents here and there. Threatened rain.

Thursday, September 15, 1870.—Awoke in the midst of a fine scenery. Mountains all round, and a fine sunrise, enhanced by clouds all about. Mountains near, and more distant, some of them with fine rugged tops. Water a-wanting. We have been waiting a long time for it, and are likely to wait a while, as the girl has gone for it, and gone down over a pretty distant horizon. The Mongols are making breakfast from some filthy water they wanted us to take. Another half-hour's walk last night would have taken us to a well, but here we are perched out in the cold, where both fuel and water must come a long distance.

8 A.M. to 12 noon. After breakfast I took off to a hill a good way off and had a fine view. Counted between eighty and ninety huts scattered over the

rich pastoral and well-watered plain. There were several lochs about and a large river, round which were clustered a large number of tents. I did not count them, but there might be perhaps sixty or seventy. The commandant was after wild-fowl, which abounded, but did not succeed in bringing down any.

3.15 P.M. to 11 P.M. Good walk through the same picturesque country. We are not on the road, but are taking a short cut along a kind of bridle-path. The scenery is most magnificent. Mountains near and in the far-off distance. Clouds casting light and shade, which play among the hills. Some very rugged hills far away seawards are very beautiful, as they have their hollows darkened and lighted up as the sun veers round. Altogether to-day the scenery of earth and sky has been so beautiful that it is almost wrong to do anything but look at it. Sunrise and sunset are, I think, more beautiful here than a sea. Is it because at sea it is so distant? Here sometimes we can get the sun to set behind some low hill, which lets us have the tinges in the clouds much more overhead than is possible on the ocean.

Friday, September 16, 1870.—Encamped in a picturesque and rather deep valley. Fuel for the cooking, but water not yet arrived. Delectated camels with Psalms. Decidedly cold. We are told that we will do Urga within the stipulated time, twenty-three

days. In that case we will arrive on Sabbath evening, and if we get away quickly and get to Kiachta in five or six days we may arrive there also on a Sabbath. It is painful to travel on Sabbath, but more painful to have that day the most exciting of the seven. Commandant knocked down three small birds with one shot.

6.15 P.M. to 12.50 A.M. First-rate walk over good roads, camels doing well. Wet on starting. One hundred and twenty camels coming down with various merchandise, some of them with logs of wood. Two make a load, and a bad load too, as they bob up and down at every step, as if in a short chopping sea. Shortly after met carts coming in a double line. We passed between the ranks. I did not count them, but think there must have been more than 350 or 400. One troop came on after another as if they would not end, and the uprights seen in the distance against the sky, which still retained a dim light from sunset, looked like the masts of a long line of ships. Later in the night we met another line of say about seventy ox-carts. Walked a good while in the clear moonlight of midnight. Wind gone down, therefore not so cold.

Saturday, September 17, 1870.—Encamped on a fine plain far from huts. Don't know where water came from this morning, but it was terribly dirty. Made a good meal notwithstanding. Either no huts

visible or so far distant that I can't be sure that they are huts. Think there are some away ahead. Commandant says we get to Kurin on Monday or Tuesday.

7.45 A.M. to 1.30 P.M. Good walk, passed two cart encampments, each computed at 200 carts. Passed good rugged hills, and recognised the place on Edkins' map. Tremendous row going on just now between the Russian and Buriat on one side, and the old Mongol on the other. The old Mongol is a blockhead, and I think the row is about water, but I don't know.

5 P.M. to 1 A.M. Beautiful sunset this evening. We were on a hill-top, and looked away westward to another range of low hills. Between us there lay an expanse of field seeming as level as a lake, and to carry out the watery analogy we saw the mountain pass we were to go through, entering between hills and still keeping the level of the plain. It was like a lake exactly. Awoke, and walked a little in the moonlight. Met thirty camels and a line of 109 carts.

Sabbath, September 18, 1870.—Encamped just over the plain we saw at sunset last night. We are some distance from the real exit, but not far. This is the Lord's day. God help me to be in the Spirit, notwithstanding all distractions. Oh, that God would give me more of His Spirit, more of His felt

presence, more of the spirit and power of prayer, that I may bring down blessings on this poor people of Mongolia! As I look at them and their huts, I ask again and again, how am I to go among them? In comfort and in a waggon with all my things about me, or in poverty, reducing myself to their level? If I go among them rich, they will be continually begging, and perhaps regard me more as a source of gifts than anything else. If I go with nothing but the Gospel, there will be nothing to distract their attention from the unspeakable gift.

8.15 A.M. to 3.15 P.M. Good long walk. Met camels, and came upon a cart encampment; estimated at 170. Know where I am on the map. There is a camel encampment where we are. Two huts from which comes fuel. Read to-day in 2 Chronicles: Asa, &c. God never failed those who trusted in Him and appealed to Him. God was displeased with the King of Judah, because after the deliverance from the Lubims, Ethiopians &c. he trusted to the arm of flesh to deliver him from the Syrians. Do we not in our day rest too much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old? Do not the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth still, to show Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him? Oh that God would give me more practical faith in Him! Where is now the Lord God of

Elijah? He is waiting for Elijah to call on Him. God give me some of Elijah's spirit, and let my power be of God, and my hope from Him for the conversion of His people.

It is nothing to the Lord to save by many or by them that have no power. Help me, O God, for I rest on Thee, and in Thy name I go against this multitude.

6 P.M. to 2 A.M. The last hour a guess. Good walk at first; 10 P.M. came to steep descent. Ground quite level before that. Came to a cairn, and at once the descent began. Tied one wheel, and dragged down. Got down all right, though with some difficulty. Good level walk after that. Don't know where we stopped, but was awake at 12.30 A.M.

Monday, September 19, 1870.—8 A.M. to 3.30 P.M. Mountains, rugged mountains all about this morning. Two camel encampments beside us. Mountain scenery really grand. There is wood on some of the hills even to the top. Wind blowing cold. 2 P.M. I forded the Tola; that is, the main stream of it. There were various little streams or pools to cross after that. After a time came near enough Mai Mai Chen to see what it was like. Long before we had a view of it, it stretched like a long wall away across the valley, or like a fortification looking up towards the source of the Tola. The wind blew with great violence, and filled the plain with dust, so

that the first view I have had of the place about Urga reminds me a good deal of one of the most impressive views I had of Tientsin, i.e. a dust storm. This plain seems a great level, with the river winding away down through it. I have not yet seen the place so fully as I hope to see it before I go, so I shall reserve the description of the plain till then.

We were stowed away in the lower portion of the Consulate, which, after our being in the wind and cold, feels as warm as if the heating apparatus were lighted. On coming in I really thought it was, and it was only after feeling about that I was assured it was only the effect of the sun shining in his strength. Coming along I had noticed a curious phenomenon. It was the blurred air rising from the ground as it does in a hot day, and yet with the furious wind coming down from the mountains it was almost intolerably cold. I am afraid that when night closes in and there is no sun it will be cold here.

I have been appointed to a nice little room here, where I think I will do for a day or two. We expect to get away the day after to-morrow. The whole of the edifices here are of wood, houses and fences. I notice in the rooms a little picture or cross, put up with a little candle stuck in front of it to be lighted on occasions. I also notice that almost every window and doorway has the cross smoked upon it above

with the flame of a candle. We have had a visit from the postmaster. Letters go to-morrow.

Returned from a hill-top, where I had a view of the landscape. The standpoint is a stony hill behind the Consulate, and as there was a bitter north wind blowing I turned my back on that and looked about me. The whole scene was bounded in every direction by mountains, more or less high and more or less distant. They were nearest at my back, and perhaps the lowest there. They were next nearest right in front over the Consulate. To the left up the Tola was a good open space, and to the right, down the Tola, was a still wider and more extensive open space.

To the left was Mai mai Chen, to the right Kurin. Kurin is rather a large place, and seems to have numerous religious buildings which are prominent.

Right below was the Russian Consulate, standing in a rectangular piece of ground fenced off with wood. There are said to be 150 soldiers in it at present. There was wood nowhere but in front, along the range of mountains that fenced off the low ground towards the south. The wood looks very brown, and does not come down to the plain. It always leaves off before that. At the very top of the hills the wood looks blacker, from some cause or other. Perhaps it is a different kind of wood, that likes to be high and dry. The wind was cold, and I was glad

to come down again quickly, stopping only to note a Mongol jogging along a road not far off very snugly on a black bullock.

As I came down I saw a mode of conveyance new to me. It was a contrivance compounded of the Chinese cart, the mule litter, and the hybrid between these two. Safely escaped two dogs, and was glad to come in out of the bitter cold. I hope Kiachta is not so cold as this.

Rode with commandant over to Urga. It is a good distance. Find that the Mongol way of sitting to one side is a good dodge. Called on a Russian firm. I admire the simplicity of the Russian merchant's furniture. Saw in the distance an immense temple, gorgeous to look at. Saw a couple of Mongols making prostrations on sloping boards, and a Mongol girl measuring the road with her body. I hope that they may soon be taught a more excellent way to heaven than that.

Urga is a wooden construction, houses and everything that I saw, except the Russian stores, which are brick. All shops and houses have the space about them enclosed by wooden railings, consisting of poles set closely together, and these in many cases are plastered over on the outside with mud. The Mongols out of town plaster over their enclosure fences also, but with the stuff of which argols are made. Roads here are very stony, and tremendous

gashes are formed in the ground at several places by water rushing down from the higher ground. A Mongol has just come to treat about camels.

3.45 to 6.45 or 7 P.M. Started on foot for Mai mai Chen. Perambulated that. It is all wooden, and not a bad little town. There are some opulent-looking establishments in it; there are also a good many small retail shops. There are a good number of Mongols about the streets, and I saw to-day the best-looking Mongol girl I have yet set my eyes on. She was evidently of the richer class, as her dress I took to be of silk. She was bent on a shopping excursion, as she carried half-a-brick of tea in her hand. She was clean (for a wonder), and really looked well with her fresh, ruddy face. Perhaps all the Mongols would look better a good deal if they had plenty of soap and water, fine clothes, good food, and less exposure to the weather. In almost every yard of any importance that I looked into there was the inevitable Russian brass tea-urn. Saw a Mongol girl with three bricks of tea on her arm. Saw a company of Mongols quarrelling. After doing this town I struck along the plain towards Ta Kurin. I did not know whether or not I would have time to visit that also, but the sun seemed pretty high, and I would at least make for the plain. Coming nearer, I steered for the most prominent temple-looking edifice, and after encountering some dogs in close

combat obtained a view of it all round. It was grand, and glittering in the setting sun with brass, gold, or gilt ornaments above and in front. The dome was painted various colours and devices, and the gentle evening breeze made some sweet-toned bells tinkle pleasantly.

As I came up two Mongol girls entered the enclosure, and on looking in to see what they were after, found them going round the building setting in motion a lot of cylinders that were placed under a little roof coming round the temple. The cylinders would be about two feet high and ten inches in diameter, and were covered with writing in Tibetan. The girls passed round the corner, and as I stood and gazed up at the dull, dead-looking edifice (all the windows and doors were closed), I could hear the noise made by the cylinders as they were set in motion. By the time I got round the outside of the enclosure the girls had made the round of the cylinders inside, and betaken themselves to a long, narrow, low shed close at hand, in which stood a long row of larger cylinders inscribed with very large letters in Tibetan, and pasted over with Tibetan writings. Beginning at one end of the shed, the girls gave each of them a turn or two. Some of the cylinders were very large and hard to turn, wanting oil badly, and almost took two people to turn them. I noticed that in a good many cases both girls took hold of the same cylinder to-

gether, and thus helped each other. I suppose the efficacy of the prayer was none the less. A man, evidently coming home from his work, was also engaged at the same thing, though he commenced at the other end of the line. Coming home I noticed several very large praying machines in private houses by themselves.

Wednesday, September 21, 1870.—Rose at daybreak, and set off to view Urga afresh. Had a good walk, and went round the most of it. A good many people giving the praying wheels outside the town a turn as they passed. Met one man with a finely polished brass one mounted on the end of a stick Attached to it was a short chain, with a little weight at the end of it. As he walked along he made it whirl round. Saw another lama travelling by prostrations. He had a piece of wood in his hand, and with it marked the ground as far forward as he could reach, then got up and walked forward to the mark, taking care, however, always to keep a good way inside it. He was constantly muttering something or other, both when upright and when prostrate. Saw a lot more wheels all about the city; from their position I think it is intended that they should be in as public places as possible. There were also numerous flags put up beside doors, said flags being covered with inscriptions in Tibetan.

Saw a very prominent and lofty-looking temple

far off in the most distant part of the city, which stood on higher ground than the rest of the town. Made for it, and on coming to it found it rather beautiful with green glazed tiles and the heavy painted eaves, which give an imposing appearance to many Chinese edifices. This fine eave was covered with netting to keep out birds, but some sparrows had found a hole and taken possession of the interior. I was disappointed in the height of the temple. Not only in this case, but as a rule I have noticed that buildings which from a distance appear very lofty lose much of their imposing grandeur when viewed more closely. This arises from the fact of the other buildings and houses being so low that anything a little higher towers over the whole neighbourhood without being in reality lofty. Returned in time for tea.

3 P.M. to 8.30 P.M. Was so late in starting, because, said the Mongols, the camels had run off. Dined and started. Mongols stupid about the road, as usual. Very cold. Two temples up the valley, one with Tibetan on the side of the hills, and the other commanding a view of the whole of Urga. Looked well. That which looked most imposing was the smallest when seen from a near standpoint. Numerous human skulls lying just outside the town, some of them fresh, and scarcely having the gristle picked off the bone.

Thursday, September 22, 1870.—Awoke by noises about daybreak, a little earlier. Rose, and found the landscape white with frost. The water-bucket all over with ice, even though it stood in the tent in which was the large cooking fire of the Mongols. Wood for fuel. Took some hot water in basin and left it on the ground till I drank tea, when I found it frozen over. On taking up my tea-kettle I found the little tea that was left in the bottom of it solid! On taking up my pen, Darling's patent, I found that also frozen! *Verily here it is cold. Yesterday morning I was* astonished to find the pools covered in Urga; this puts that into the shade. I do not know what I am to do to keep my pen and ink workable.

7 A.M. to 2 P.M. Good walk. Less than the above. Mountains; men wanted too much for oxen; camels took up the carts, down the other side with one wheel bound. *Ground covered with hoar frost.* Earth is mould. Commandant's cart broke down. Woodland scenery from top of hill. Encamped on low ground in open country; camel employing the time by weeping, wants its little child. Between seventy and eighty Russian carts passed our camp. They are going on to Urga. Sun makes it less cold *now: tea leaves frozen in teapot soon after starting:* were thawed before we camped.

4.15 P.M. to 10 P.M. Fair walk, but interrupted by one of our camels, which is weak indeed.

Friday, September 23, 1870.—Awoke in the midst of a fine plain, mountains all round. A good many tents: pen frozen, ink-bottle also; tea-kettle burst. 7 A.M. to 1 P.M. Pretty good walk; wood still about, but not much at all, only patches here and there in sheltered hollows of the hills; one camel decidedly lame; little wind, not so cold as yesterday; sun shining into the cart so fiercely that it is almost too hot. Mongols have taken us away past water, and have to go for it. They are essentially more stupid than either of the other two sets we had before. Had a good Mongol lesson from the Cossack, sitting on my shaft.

5 P.M. to 2 A.M. Long but very bad walk; long and almost constant interruptions in a camel, that was decidedly lame, refusing to go. Burden shifted, scarcely go even then. Wake up in a fine scene at 5.45. Passed a pass: one hardwood, young birch; other ravine and hill beyond, but close at hand. In front mountain ridges running in between each other just as when you show the fingers of one hand in between the fingers of the other. Upset into a dry ditch at midnight; nothing broken, but everything flying about in a fine state. Candles &c. all over the cart; Cossack thrashes Mongol, commandant likewise. The commandant gets to see what is what. I get off the large stockings and trousers and set to work.

Saturday, September 24, 1870.—7 A.M. to 2 P.M. Good walk. Awoke in a fine plain with lots of cattle about. Started, and felt so sleepy that I went off and slept till 11 A.M. Then we were passing through another plain, this one alluvial, with flocks and herds, but mainly agricultural. They were winnowing grain, treading it out with oxen. Came to a river and camped. The Mongol who upset me last night broke two bottles in unloading a camel.

5 P.M. to 3 A.M. Quick walk first part; agricultural Mongols; good many of them. 9 P.M. Came to great mountain, wooded; bad road through the wood. Oxen to commandant's carts; two camels to mine. Summit, 11.30 P.M.; this side 12.30 A.M.

Sabbath, September 25, 1870.—Awoke 7 A.M. in a plain; some tents about and in the distance. Last night's mountain visible at a respectable distance. Run a little better, I think. This is the Lord's day. I question much if my Russian companions know it, or if they would make any difference, though they did know it.

Reflections on Historical Books of Old Testament.—Finished a day or two ago the reading of the historical books of the Old Testament, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, I mean. I have been much struck with the manner in which God's goodness is exhibited there. When there is an evil king, evil is determined, but no sooner is the least repentance found in him than God at once

repents of the evil He has said He will do. Ahab even is pitied, and though God will in no way show mercy to evil-doers, He does have pity on men when they do not harden themselves against Him. How eagerly does God listen for the least sinner asking mercy! How eagerly does He welcome the least sign of repentance! When the prodigal is a long way off how eagerly does our Heavenly Father run to meet him! I think that with these books of the Old Testament alone a man may feel quite convinced of the goodness and mercy. It is quite melting to think of God's love and pity manifested in these books. Can a man read these books and have hard thoughts of God or fail to hope for mercy? I could see light through the blackest ranks of Calvinism with these histories. In spite of the unpardonable sin and everything else, I am certain from this history that no one who asks for mercy will ever be sent away without it. Bless God for that!

I would even go further, though in a less important connection. Do you remember that prayer of the fellow who had cheek enough to pray, somewhere in Chronicles, that God would enlarge his border, and keep him from evil, that it might not grieve him? When reading that I could not help thinking what a cheek the fellow had, but God thought otherwise, and gave him the wish of his heart. This may encourage us to come to God

confidently with our worldly affairs, and reasonably expect to receive His blessing in them.

Again, as to sickness and disease, take the case of Hezekiah, who did go to God about his; and that other wicked fellow, I forget his name, who was smitten with disease, and of whom it is specially said that he went to the physician and not to God. If this is to teach us anything, it should surely make us use prayer more largely in cases of sickness than is usually done. We believe that sickness comes from God, and that He can heal it, while the doctor knows very little about it at the best. He that made the body does He not know how to heal it? Use means—doubtful as the remedies of medical men are at best—use means, by all means, but let the universal and most depended on be that of prayer. Are we not warranted from Scripture to expect far more in relation to healing from prayer than men generally do?

9.30 A.M. to 2.30 P.M. Good walk. Read Nehemiah, and finished Confession of Faith. Good scenery. Commandant says Kiachta the day after to-morrow, i.e. Tuesday.

Monday, September 26, 1870.—Started without making tea or anything, the reason being that we, 6 to 10 A.M., were not camped near water. There was a river about an hour and a half further on, and we supposed that we were to have tea there; but the

Mongols turned away up the country after we came to the river. Commandant did not know what they were doing at the time, but witness his wrath when he discovered that they had left the river for good, and that we had to cross a watershed before we could come again to water.

Along the river we saw early were numerous huts, with flocks and horses. The country around was bleak-looking in the extreme, with, however, a good many Scotch fir trees on the hillsides. They were not quite like the home trees, being greener, and as they stood more apart than is usual in a Scotch plantation were more run into branches. Indeed, in the distance, I thought they were elms or planes, not Scotch firs. At one place we passed the few wide-set trees had seeded, and a whole crop of young firs were coming up, then about ten feet high. These young ones looked more orthodox than their sires.

To-day we came upon numerous low rose bushes, red with hips, which we picked, and, being breakfast-less, were glad to eat. I, in my present feeble state, did not venture on many, but a few tasted very nicely in the mouth. In the desert here there is a super-abundance of magpies. With their butterfly rig they seem very much out of place.

To-day saw in the distance a small wooden miao, exactly corresponding to a drawing I have seen of Senan's. The plains that we now cross lie between

mountain ranges not far apart and not lofty. The soil is very rich, being alluvial, and seems to promise a rich return to any one who would cultivate it; seems, I say, for there may be some opposing influences of climate that would militate against successful farming. The rivers (at present, at least) are small, and the banks about six or eight feet high. I don't know how they do in a spate. The true plain, as I said, ceases a short way off, and the barren sand is marked by the low clumps of coarse bushes.

3 to 12 P.M. Long and good walk across country, over mountains and down valleys, almost as often with no track as with one. Camels doing well. Read Esther and some *Spectator*. On coming to the top of the saddle of a ridge had a fine view of a mountain range, black, distant, and cloud-capped. Awoke about 11.15 P.M. and found that we were driving down a steep ravine. It was very steep indeed, but the cart did not go too fast, as there was good, deep, hard sand, into which the wheels sank. I kept thinking how about getting up the other side, but when we got down we stopped for the night, being near the river. I suppose that carts coming from Kiachta would go round some other way, and not attempt to go up that incline. There was wood near it. There seems to be wood at no great distance from any point between Urga and Kiachta.

Tuesday, September 27, 1870.—Awoke this morn-

ing and saw the sun shining by the little blurred glass pane in my cart. Looked out, and saw everything covered with hoar frost. Instinctively tried my pen, and found it empty; filled it, and it did not freeze till I had made and eaten my breakfast. It is cold. Some drops of water from a pot on one grate fell upon another grate close to it, and in the same trench, and were converted into ice upon the iron rim, although the Cossack was busy kindling a fire in it at the time.

8 A.M. to 3 P.M. As we were about to start, commandant came to say that we should reach Kiachta to-day. I at once began to wonder what kind of reception I would receive from Grant.[1] Started, and soon struck the river Iro, which is by far the largest we have seen on the way up. There was deep mist in all the valley of the river as we left it, and it was some time before the sun broke through and showed us a beautiful landscape of mountain and field. Passed a ridge after a time. Here I enjoyed a camel ride in a horse saddle. Commandant hunted up some grand nuts, the winter store of some animal whose abode we rudely assailed. Coming down from the height, we passed through a most beautiful birch wood. The leaves were yellow and soon to fall, the sun shone beautifully, and we had a regular mellow autumn scene.

[1] A trader from whom he expected assistance and advice.

We are here encamped at what the Mongols say is forty li from Kiachta, romantically beside a little glen; water at bottom, and birch trees in yellow leaf lifting themselves a little above the level of the field. Wooded mountain behind, Scotch fir wood before. Hill sprinkled with wood to right, sun making shadow on our side of a hill to the left. Read Song of Solomon; can make neither top nor tail of it.

5.30 P.M. to 11.30 P.M. Good walk. After dark crossed a very bad water. Stuck in the mud, and as I passed saw commandant balancing himself on a small islet. He was taken off by a mounted Mongol. After that through a fir wood, very picturesque; then a plain and a wood again, shortly after clearing which we camped for the night. We were to have reached Kiachta to-night, but Mongol says we are ten li from it—which, by the way, is the distance we have been from it for a long time.

Wednesday, September 28, 1870.—6 to 11.15 A.M. Awoke, and saw Kiachta in the distance. Started without tea away down to cross the valley to the town, and got on well enough till we came to the lowest part, in which was a morass. Attempted to cross it and floundered Mongol's pony several times. Tried at another place, but that was no better. Finally, had to double round the head of the loch from which the water came; this lost about three hours. Commandant brought down a goose.

I feel a little of the disheartening feeling coming over me that crept over me when I came to London first, and found myself alone in a strange city with indefinite prospects before me. It was not on my first trip to London, when I appeared before the Mission Committee—that passed off all right; the time I refer to was after I had been accepted by the Mission, and had come down to go to Cheshunt College, and had had long argument about doctrine with Dr. Reynolds, that this feeling came over me. I was lodged among strangers, and as the Committee meeting was on Monday I had left home on Friday to avoid Sabbath travelling. This left me all Saturday and Sabbath to ruminate in a state of inaction. The parting from friends came upon me with fresh force; my prospect as to money matters was not very bright. Would the College Committee receive me or reject me? How would I get on, living in the new fashion —new to me—of indoor college life? All these things came upon me suffused with tender thoughts of friends, and I remember standing on one of the bridges—it must have been Westminster Bridge, I think—feeling the weight very heavy, when there passed me on the bridge a poor old bent woman, bowed down so that she could not lift herself up, bent down and bent round so that her face looked up again. I looked at her, and thought what a fool I was to be thinking my lot hard; thought of the poor

woman's state and of my own, thanked God and took courage. God rendered my fears at that time groundless. I had a happy and prosperous time in England, and left it rejoicing, having had all things supplied me even as I needed them. O God, my God, my help in times past, give me faith to believe that Thou wilt still help me yet in all my difficulty and out of it. O God, give me the close childlike faith that will cling close to Thee in all things. Turn Thou the hearts of men, open my way or close it as Thou seest to be best, and do Thou give me the happy consciousness of being near to Thee, under the shadow of Thy wings.

Thursday, September 29, 1870.—Slept well during the night; got up and finished home letter. Have nothing in particular to do now but 'realise my position.' The tone of the Shanghai papers, which are here up to September 7, is not reassuring, and if I were in Peking I would not feel at all comfortable, and am pretty sure I could not study to much purpose. I am in difficulty here: I would be in hot water in Peking; and this is just the difficulty of being in China and the mission field when troublous times come upon us. And this is the time for trying what a man's stuff is that he is made of, and how he can stand it, and how he will wear, and of what sort his faith is, and how he can rely on his God, and how far prayer will go. God, I thank Thee that I can

come to Thee by prayer, and that Thou dost put it into my heart to come to Thee. Oh give me more power and might in prayer—power and might even as Elijah had; help me to remove difficulties by prayer, and to live by faith, and also to live rejoicing in Thee, and in tribulation.

At Kiachta he was welcomed by Mr. Grant, a Scotch trader, who allowed him to lodge in his house, and did what he could to find him efficient teachers, this being a matter of great difficulty.

Tuesday, October 4, 1870.—Rose 7 A.M. Awoke earlier, and saw the light, but indulged in a snooze; bothered by my present uncertain position. Went out after breakfast among Grant's Buriat workmen, and got about thirty words, mostly from the carpenter's shop. Grant is building here at a great rate. If the whole place is not new I have some difficulty in deciding on what is new. Watched carefully the construction of log-house. It is scarcely possible to conceive anything firmer than a log-house, at the same time it must be an airy place if not plastered inside and caulked outside. The Buriats work in skin clothes even to the hands, which are enveloped in a kind of mitten with all the fingers but the thumb in one compartment. Gloves and all, they handle their little sharp, compact-looking axes with great dexterity, and soon fit a log to the wall, or hew a good squared-down beam from a tree. In this respect

they must resemble Canadian woodmen, I suppose. Surely the axe of the Canadian is larger than this one.

Inside the little workshop was an energetic-looking Buriat working away on a bench at what must have been part of a door. He was mortising, and making a good job of it, to all appearance. From him I got the majority of my words. He said the Buriats have no word for chisel (this is a Russian introduction), and I believed him till he gave me what he said was Buriat for a fancy plane (a plough?). If they have no word for chisel, can I suppose they have one for such a plane?

After getting my quota of words I walked through the town. The main object in it is the church, a large whitewashed structure, built by Mr. Grant's father-in-law—when he was a rich man. He was made poor, comparatively speaking, in one night by a great fire which burnt up all before it. In addition to the church are some streets of Cossacks' houses, very wretched-looking, the streets desolate enough at best, but rendered much more so this morning by the snow melting in the sun, which is still high, and manages to thaw away all the snow that falls in places where it shines, though it was frost all day in the shade. Passing the town, I made for the river, which rolled on quiet and cold. Passed through large orchards of apple trees; doubled about, went to the extreme

west, got on a hill, and came round home again in time for dinner at 4 P.M. I felt very lonely, and not having a teacher I am thrown idle, as it were, a great part of the day, after I get my words. It is true I am taking notice of all I see, but it always occurs to me that this is not furthering the Mongolian Mission in any direct way. I often think of what Dr. Alexander said in his charge at my ordination : 'You do not go to discover new countries.' Would I had a teacher, that the language might go on full swing!

To-day I felt a good deal like Elijah in the wilderness when the reaction came on after his slaughter of the priests of Baal. He prayed God to die. I wonder now if I am telling the truth when I say that I felt drawn towards suicide. I felt that I was afraid that if I remained long in this state I would be more strongly tempted to it. Is suicide itself a sufficient proof of insanity? O God! prevent me from this end. I take this opportunity of declaring strongly that I, as well as God, think it not good for man to be alone, and that on all occasions two missionaries should go together. I was not of this opinion a few weeks ago, but I had no idea of how weak an individual I am. My eyes have filled with tears frequently these last few days in spite of myself, and I don't wonder in the least that Mr. Grant's brother shot himself. I rather wonder that Grant himself and

Hageman[1] have not done likewise long ago. Would I were down south again to be out of temptation! I think if I had a teacher, and were going on with Mongolian, I would be all right. My poor mother, how she would feel if I did anything like this. Oh, the intense loneliness of Christ's life! Not a single one understood Him! He bore it. O Jesus, let me follow in Thy steps, and have in me the same spirit that Thou hadst.

Grant came to-night about 8 P.M. bringing a letter, three papers, July *Chronicle* and August *Recorder*. All well, praise God!

Wednesday, October 5, 1870.—Rose 6.50. Wonder where I am to get my words to-day. The Lord will provide. Amen. O God, do Thou convert Mongolia, infuse spiritual life into the Greek Church, teach men to be enthusiastic for Thee, and redeem from iniquity this poor sin-stricken world. O God, hasten the coming of the good time, put it into the hearts of Thy people to pray earnestly for it, and then hear the prayer. O God our God, satisfy us with Thy mercy.

Grant says I must not go too far from the house. A wolf bit a man in his own yard not long since, and he died. They came along the other night, and ate a horse about a mile from this. Grant started about noon. I picked up thirty or forty words from his

[1] An Englishman in the employ of Mr. Grant.

workmen, wrote them, took book in hand, and went off to the most isolated Buriat village on the plain. Examined a burying place. There had been a burial lately, the appearance of a recent grave in front of five newly erected posts, with the customary notch at the head. Prayer flags attached, green, blue, orange, white, red, little piers with devices painted on them set all round at distances facing away from the grave. Disordered paraphernalia of other graves about. Went on to village, found twenty or twenty-five houses all deserted. Sun so hot that it was almost oppressive. Feel very much better to-day, as I have plenty to do, and the prospect of a teacher. Mrs. Grant is at present calling on the Buriat judge about the matter. I find that I am getting a good deal of Russian among my Buriat, but that cannot be helped.

CHAPTER III

WINTER LIFE IN A MONGOL TENT

IN non-Christian countries the value of time is but feebly recognised. This is a very formidable hindrance to missionary work. We have already seen how this delayed Mr. Gilmour at Kalgan, and at Kiachta it placed many obstacles in the way of his learning the language. The teachers seemed to feel that if they did not come to-day they could to-morrow, and on the slightest pretexts their engagements were broken. After six weeks' unsatisfactory work and waiting in and about Kiachta, another crisis occurred in the affairs of James Gilmour, and again his method of settling it revealed the man. If Mongol teachers could not or would not come to him, why, he would go to them. Thus he came to his famous resolve to go and live in a Mongol tent.

Sabbath, December 11, 1870.—Dull morning, snow falling; went to the Greek service, but did not stay it out. It was in the basement of the Russian church. This seems to be the ordinary place for service on Sabbath. On holy days they go upstairs. A good

congregation, but small, considering that there are but two churches in the town. Read a sermon of Spurgeon's, and a great part of the *Life of Mahomet*, by Irving. At dinner Grant asked me how I was getting on with my Mongol, and remarked that I did not seem to speak it readily yet; that two months' study should have made me fluent in it; that he would undertake to speak it well in two months if he set about it. This was a severe blow to me, and brought me down from a lofty eminence of self-esteem to the lowest depth of the valley of humiliation. I had coaxed myself to think that I was getting on well, and to be told thus that I was not getting on!

Serious reflection and calm contemplation, however, softened the blow. One consideration must not be overlooked, viz. that both at Kudara and here even at present I have not had such a teacher as I could have wished for, and that not having my passport[1] I refrain from mixing among people so much as I might have done had I not been living in Russia merely on sufferance. Then again, for some time back I have been hurrying on the reading of the Psalms, in the hope of thus getting up a number of words, collecting material as it came, to be licked into shape when I mix among people, as I hope soon to

[1] He had not secured a passport before leaving Peking, and for a long time it was doubtful whether he would be allowed to stay in the country.

do. Again, I think he under-estimates the difficulty of the language. He says four years may do for Chinese, and Edkins says that Mongolian cannot be got up in one-third of the time necessary for Chinese. This would give almost a year and a quarter to Mongolian. But after all I admit the truth of his remark so far. It was just what I was thinking myself in a small degree that I was not good at the colloquial—so far I admit the justness of his criticism—and that I may have some more practice in speaking I have asked an old man who lives on the premises, and knows Mongol, to come to my room to-day at noon, and I am thinking of making a raid into Mongolia to-morrow.

Monday, December 12, 1870.—Rose 4.40 A.M. Had a fair day at Mongolian; called on Dashe, Grant's mother-in-law's Buriat, and he said he would get me a teacher. A short time after I heard some one enter our premises, and on looking out saw Dashe and another man going away. It turned out afterwards that this was the teacher, and that they had tried my door and gone away, because it was fixed. The couple of asses, why did they not make a noise? I was inside. I could not see the teacher to-day, however, as he had gone off and got drunk! Had a visit from my bath attendant, and find that I cannot hope to sharpen my Mongol much from him. Walked to the market and tried on my Mongol there, but

that was not very satisfactory, as everybody gathers round in silence to wonder what kind of a man I must be if I am not a Russian. A Russian suggested that I was a Mongol! The Mongols would not talk honestly and made faces, so I made off. Had a visit from Grant's contractor, and found from cross-examination that nothing whatever was to be hoped for from the teacher he had mentioned. I have some hope though of walking sometimes down to where he lives, and perhaps there I may be able to get people to mix in conversation. Finished the *Life of Mahomet.* It is a strange affair.

Tuesday, December 13, 1870.—Rose 6 A.M. Colder than usual, dull; did not go to Mongolia as I had intended, but waited at home to receive my new Buriat teacher, and he did not come, though I went thrice to Dashe to ask about him. I suspect to-day was some great day among them, and Grant says that, judging from the quantity of spirit sold, it was. It is most trying to wait on these useless fellows. To-day a Russian called on me desirous of learning English. I replied that, as I was arranging for a new teacher, I could give no positive answer at the present moment. He is to call again on Friday.

Wednesday, December 14, 1870.—Rose 5.15 A.M. Cold and a little dull. I am going to Mongolia to-day to Olau Bourgass, the nearest cluster of tents, to see if I can make arrangements for a teacher

and arrange to live among them, and may the Lord direct my steps! Found it cold on the road, and arrived without particular adventure at the hut of Grant's contractor at Olau Bourgass. Found him at his prayers. He motioned me to sit down, and when his devotions were over he gave me a warm welcome. He lives alone in his tent, having nothing to care for but the horses for the courier service and a couple of lamas to attend to his wants, one of whom goes with the letters when they come. He prepared a meal for me, stewed beef and nothing else, and put it into a basin! We talked, and I learned a great deal when at last I broke my mind to him, and was glad to find that he received it favourably. I settled to remain there during the night. Nothing very remarkable happened, except that we were invaded by a great blustering lama intoxicated. He came romping into the tent as if he would have knocked everything down. After a time he went away and lodged in the next hut. I went to bed about 10 P.M. and slept well, though my feet were cold towards morning.

Thursday, December 15, 1870.—Rose with daylight, learned some words, and started for Kiachta in the lama's gig about 11 A.M. It was almost intolerably cold, but I survived, and heated myself with walking. On the road I agreed with the lama for half a rouble per day. I to eat his food, and to give his servants a gratuity of one kopeck each per day.

Friday, December 16, 1870.—This morning set about getting a fur coat. I went to Dashe and told him what I wanted. He was just on his way to get two bottles filled with arika. He came out of the shop saying they had a coat for sale. Waited till it came. It turned out to be a short old patched thing, and of course I would have nothing to do with it. Dashe did not seem willing to go to the bazaar with me, and I went alone. Indeed, I suspect Dashe has not only made no effort to secure me a teacher, but done all he could to keep me to the present teacher. I don't think he at all likes the idea of my going into Mongolia. Could find nothing to my mind in the bazaar, came home, and determined to take my mattress, plaids, and blankets to Mongolia to-morrow, and make the attempt to stay for perhaps a week. Now may the Lord bless this attempt and help me to gain the language, and may He Himself bless the people!

Saturday, December 17, 1870.—I started for Mongolia in Grant's lesser tarantass about 1 P.M. and arrived at the Mongol's premises all right, but fearfully cold. The wind was in my face. Had a pretty decent afternoon of it, but a fearfully cold night. There was a cold draught that I could stand against in my fur cap, but could not bear my shoulders cold. However, I endured patiently till morning, and then had a cold walk.

Sabbath, December 18, 1870.—Had a good day at Mongol, but not in things spiritual, and I think I shall try and be in Russia on Sabbath day after this. My ink was all frozen hard when I attempted to write, but I have got it thawed at last.

Monday, December 19, 1870.—Ink so hard that I have given it up, in the hope that pencil writing may not be obliterated. Had a good night of it from 12 to 7.45. Was comfortable all but the feet, which towards morning became cold. I have given the lama money to buy me a pair of Mongol socks, and a goat's skin to make me a pair of warm wrappers in the shape of Wellington boots with the hair inside. The lama came back with a sheep's skin, as no goat's skin was to be had. He also brought with him a warm fur coat and a fur foot-wrapper from Mrs. Grant. In these I slept comfortably and warmly. Went to bed about midnight.

Tuesday, December 20, 1870.—Got up at sunrise, after a fine night. The lama and I were almost cross with each other in the morning, but it passed off directly. I entertain a high opinion of my lama host. Walked during the day to the lake whence our water comes, and good water it is, though in the shape of ice. In the evening visited some Mongol tents near at hand, and saw a number of various people with whom I had some little talk. The tents were good, much larger and cleaner than the one I

inhabit, but from what I saw of the lamas I think more than ever of my landlord.

We have no end of visitors; among them to-night we have a man from the neighbourhood of Kalgan. The Kalgan man was to sleep before me, and of course I had to go to bed first. I did not want to go to bed till twelve midnight, but at 11 P.M. the guest was so sleepy that I trotted off to let him get to sleep.

Wednesday, December 21, 1870.—The Kalgan man was going to start at 6 A.M., but it was nine before he mounted. Walked to-day S.W. till I came within sight of a temple. Asked my lama about it, but he knew nothing about the lamas; they were not his lamas, and he had no dealings with them. Had a good evening of it at Mongol, and got to bed about midnight. During the evening the Mongols had been making charcoal, taking it from the fire and quenching it between two basins. After the aperture above was closed over, the charcoal was piled upon the fire, and the tent was warm for once.

Thursday, December 22, 1870.—Rose early, and was out in time to see the sun rise. It was rather beautiful, but the beauty was somewhat lessened in my eyes by the cold; the wind was blowing from the sun and made me turn my back on it. Long lines of camels making towards Kiachta.

About 10 A.M. a messenger came in from the

south. The lama had been telling me that he intended to go to Grant's with his gig, but when the letter came he had to get on his horse and go off. He was sitting half-dressed when it came, and his face was washed in double quick time. He gave the man who brought it a good blowing up, I could scarcely tell for what, but the real cause of it no doubt was that he came in twelve hours late.

About noon walked a long distance towards the S.E. Came back hoping that an itinerant lama, who had come to our tent after our host left, would have gone ; as I came near I saw his horse hobbled near, and on going into the tent there he was. The look of him I did not like at all ; he had a mean, sneaking appearance, which I disliked more than the look of the two professional beggars who paid us a visit last night, and were got rid of with a cup full of barley meal. Set to work listening, and think that even from this objectionable man I am picking up something. Lobsung, my host, came back in the evening not in over good humour. The express had come in twelve hours late, as I calculated, and in squaring up with Grant he found that he was fined in 54 taels. Had dinner and talk. He did not permit his guest to eat our dinner ; the stranger dined with the servants.

Host remarked that his Gegen [1] was dead. I

[1] Living lama, or Buddha.

expressed surprise that he should die. He asked where my Christ was. About to reply, I looked up and saw the felt above the fire red. A sensation was at once created. Dogar tried to scrape off the fire with a piece of wood, but Dogar was short, and so was the wood, and he could not reach it. He had to look for another piece of wood, and by the time he got it the fire was too deep to be scraped off. The sensation was now intense. Host shouted, 'Water, water!' and fumbled about in the tea-pots and cans. The guest was up and said he would put it out. Taking a quantity of liquid into his mouth he attempted to squirt it up, but that had no effect. Then some one tried to throw water up out of the teapot, but that would not do. Finally the ladle was filled and dashed up against the roof. Two or three applications quenched the fire and spattered us all over with sooty water. Host's face and fine red coat were in a mess. A brush was sent for from a neighbouring tent and the soot brushed away, while all but the sweep crouched as far from the scene of operation as the circumference of the tent would allow. After all was finished the lama rubbed his face and coat, and laughing at the disaster taught me the words connected with it. During the whole day they had been making charcoal, and about 10 P.M. the aperture above was closed and the charcoal heaped on. The tent was beautifully warm, and

there were holes enough about the tent to keep us from suffocating.

The lama tested individually the silver roubles he had got from Kiachta, and counted them carefully.

Friday, December 23, 1870.—Got up early this morning and stalked about watching the sunrise in a cloudy heaven. Had a good morning at Mongol, and about noon walked two hours. On coming back I found that the mean-looking lama had gone bag and baggage. I asked host who he was, and was rather astonished when I was told that he was a begging lama. 'When beggars ride,' says our proverb, 'honest men walk.' This begging system is a mystery to me. Men take to it, it seems, as a profession, without in the least making pretence to misfortune or distress. A beggar on horseback is rather formidable. He took mutton out of his saddle-bag and cooked a dinner for himself, giving a portion to our servant. I understand also that he begged some money out of my host. His case is not an exceptional one. I am told that beggars travel in company, with eight or ten camels and a tent. A drunken woman, the mother in a neighbouring tent, came in and bothered us this evening.

Entered one tent and saw another good-looking daughter. Had a good evening at Mongol, a warm night, a good waking, and saw the lama get his head shaved. When the one side was cleared his

servant rested, and he looked for all the world like a stage clown.

Saturday, December 24, 1870.—During the night some one came to our tent. I did not hear, but there was in the morning an extra man in the tent and a camel moored outside. Started at about 9.30 A.M. When more than halfway to Mai mai Chen met Grant's man coming with the machine to take me home. I would have gone straight on with him, but he said Grant wanted the fur coat and foot-wrapper, so we had to go south to the tent. Lobsung was a little surprised to see me. Arrived all square, bathed, changed, had a quiet afternoon and a good dinner in Grant's.

Sabbath, December 25, 1870.—Had a quiet day, and was called to dinner about 5 P.M. Found a great company at dinner. More had come than were expected, and the goose and pudding had rather an exhausted look after making the round. The earlier part of the day had been spent at cards, and as they were sitting down again to resume the play I at once decamped and had a quiet evening. Read at Ranke's *History of the Popes*, Macaulay's Criticism, and Irving's *Mahomet*.

Tuesday, December 27, 1870.—Rose late a little, had a morning at devotion, and started southward 12 noon. Reached the tent in about two hours. Went to Kiachta by the river, had a close adventure

with dogs near Mai mai Chen. Cold wind blowing from the south-west. Lobsung gone to a neighbouring village. Had a fair evening of it after Lobsung came back. Dined on a dish that took about three hours to make. Mutton minced and put inside dough, making little pellets. Garlick and carrot added. I did not like it at all, and would twenty times rather have dined on the simple mutton boiled. I hope they will never again take it into their heads to honour me in the same manner. Got a map of the world from my host in the evening, and made him cross by affirming that the world was a globe and that Muirhead had started from London and gone west. I had also started and gone east, and that both of us had reached Shanghai.

Wednesday, December 28, 1870.—Rose a good while before sunrise. Walked, and never before felt it so cold. Frosty mist in the valley. When the sun did rise it loomed in radiance through the thin mist. The horses did not seem to heed it, but walked straight towards it going to their pasture. Walked about noon, and found it so desperately cold that I had to hurry home dead beat by the cold. The cold was furious. My overshoes are being made to-day, or rather boggled ; they are making them too small, and patching them out. The first part of the process is to make the thread. Chinaman from Kalgan visited us to-day. I have not quite forgotten all my

Chinese yet. Entered a hut this afternoon. It was a poor hut, and the woman suggested that I had come to Mongolia for less creditable purposes than that of getting up the language. Vanity is the same all the world over, and the conceit of the woman was great. Coming back to the tent, found in it the nice-looking daughter who brought me home from a visit I paid to one of the tents. I felt much inclined to escort her home, as one good turn deserves another, but refrained, fearing that though she might attach no importance to it, others might put a wrong interpretation on it. Had a dinner on mutton, not so offensively prepared as yesterday, and a good evening at Mongol.

Thursday, December 29, 1870.—Rose in time to see the sun rise. Feel satisfied that two nights more and I may return to the haunts of civilisation, there to write a host of letters to friends on the subject of the old year and the new.

Beggar this morning, as far as I could see, without trousers. He must have a cold time of it going about in that rig. 11 A.M. Have just had a most trying passage at arms with my teacher. I wanted to know the infinitive of *bahtaho*, that I might look it up in the dictionary. The Buriat teacher gave me a phrase for 'derived,' and I tried this, but this would not do. I then proceeded to instance half a dozen cases, *oozeson*, *oozeho*, and so on, when he broke

out that these words were not at all the same, their meanings were different; he could not make out what I meant by going on thus. To make matters worse, he would not stop talking, but gave me a host of sentences in which these different words came in in such a way that their meanings were manifest. To be compelled to listen to a long string of these examples, which had nothing whatever to do with the subject in hand, was most provoking, and I had frequently to cover my face with my hands to cover my vexation, and pray fervently that God would give me patience. I got him stopped at last, and by some means, which I now forget, got him to say the infinitive *bahtaho*. One irritating element in the affair was, when I made a wrong shot at the infinitive he would scarcely stop on compulsion from explaining the meaning of the word, while it was the form that I wanted.

I now tried to get out of him a name for the infinitive, but it was little use. I looked in the dictionary for an infinitive, and pointed out *taddana*. Then I gave the past and interrogative, &c., when unfortunately and quite incidentally it turned out that the meaning was not 'draw,' as I thought, but 'know.' The 'd' and 't' are sounded much alike; *tattana* is to draw, and on this meaning I had to endure a string of examples which I thought would prove endless.

My vexation was now something alarming, and

for the time I could do nothing but cover my face and pray for patience. In the mean time the teacher started off on a long harangue about his not being able to tell me what I wanted, if I could not tell him what I was asking. I could have shrieked with vexation, but was enabled to sit still with my face buried in my hands while the oration still went on. On recovering myself, I sat for a little thinking how to go on, when my teacher took the dictionary and proceeded to read it down, asking me if I knew this word and that. I could scarcely give him civil answers, and this part of the drama ended by my burying my face in my hands, and one of the men at my side telling the teacher that I was engaged in meditation. I wanted to find *oozeho*, and asked him to write it so that I might turn it up. He wrote it for me, and was for looking for it in the dictionary also. As he knew nothing of the arrangement of the book, he would have found it as easily as if it had been a needle in a haystack. I managed to get the book at last, and turned up the word in a twinkling. This did not bring me much nearer my aim. I now bethought me of *bahtaho*. I made him write it, and found it easily, but the two dots opposite the 'h' were wanting, and he hesitated to say it was the correct word. To satisfy myself I made him pronounce the word before and the word after it. This was so far right, the word was the one I wanted, but whenever

I pronounced *bahtaho* he insisted on pronouncing these two words also! I told him I wanted the one word only. This was so far good, but I was no nearer the infinitive than ever. What was I to do? I could do nothing, and resigned the book to him in despair. In turning over it he used an expression about *tologoi* which I had heard him use before, and which I thought was what I wanted. I did not quite catch it, and on attempting to use it with an illustration I was entertained by the lama explaining, amid the laughter of the audience, that if such were so, it was just possible the sun might take it into its head to rise during the night.

This adventure has convinced me more than ever that any attempt, however slight, to anticipate or accclerate the trickling stream of language which I attempt to catch from day to day is worse than useless. It is a very lamentable fact that my temper should have been so sorely tried in the affair. The man did not provoke me intentionally. Any other man would have caused much more irritation. A like difficulty may happen any day. It may happen every day. I am to gain the language. How? At this expense of temper, and with this difficulty in restraining feeling. I hope not, and pray that God may give me patience as well as eagerness.

I have written this long account of the adventure partly to recover myself and partly to give one

example of the difficulties a missionary may meet with in learning a language. The difficulties are not singular, though the patience may be. The young men in the Customs at Peking sometimes do more than drive their teachers out of the room by throwing the books at them.

Friday, December 30, 1870.—Had a pretty fair day of it at Mongol. My lama was going to Kiachta, but put off and put off till he did not go. Walked out and cut a stick, but was forced home by the cold. In the evening a guest came and remained all night. We had some talking; I had more difficulty in asking and answering a few questions than I ought to have had. I am afraid that I am not very quick at picking up the language, but perhaps by perseverance I may manage the language. Correctness may be better than speed, and I hope I may get up the language at last.

Saturday, December 31, 1870.—Guest rose late, and as he was outside me I had to wait till he rose. When he did get up he went off without waiting for tea even. Shortly after there came in two men, looking for a lost camel, a young one which had gone a-missing last night. It is doubtless stolen. A few minutes ago a Chinaman came in almost frozen. Though he had good clothes he was not warmly clad, and had been riding with short sleeves and gloveless hands.

Monday, January 2, 1871.—To-day I kept the secular festival of the new year, and employed myself in writing letters and reading a little of *Mahomet and his Successors*. The great people of Kiachta were sending away the governor after his visit. The commissary and another called on Grant, and I left them at cards. Bought gloves, boots. Carried them down under my coat.

Thursday, January 5, 1871.—Great superfluity of beggars. The snowstorm, which has been threatening for some days past, is coming down now. There is no wind, and in the earlier part of the day the snow came gently. Now, however, as it gets dark the snow is coming on thicker. It is also colder. The lama has come back from Kiachta, and from his general silence of manner and the way in which he is making up his books, I conclude he has been away getting himself fleeced. After dinner was fairly overcome by sleep. Slept till 8 P.M. After that had a good time at Mongol till 11 P.M.

Friday, January 6, 1871.—Last night about an inch of snow fell. This morning cold. Saw the sun rise. Visit from the lama who some days ago vainly tried to persuade Lobsung to transact business for him. He made another attempt this morning, and almost became rude when Lobsung still refused. Last night a lama in a neighbouring tent died. He was about sixty years of age, and from the account

given of him I conclude he is the same man whom I saw on Monday, December 19, 1870. He was one of a family of two tents. When I entered the one I found him at the fire with his prayers open before him. He soon left, telling me his tent was next door. I soon followed him and found him and other two busy at a pair of dice. He was so busy that he had barely time to be civil to me. It was after seeing him and another (brother) that I wrote in this book that the more I see of the lamas I think the more of my host. As is perhaps natural, my host manifests a great unwillingness to say much about it. I don't press him much.

11.30 to 2.30.—Long walk across the valley, where I found one man cutting wood with a good two-handled saw. Entered another man's tent and was only indifferently received. I would gladly have drunk tea, but after I had been a short time in the woman said, 'My dog is dangerous, go out with that man.' Thus sent off I departed. I had come by the road, but as that was roundabout I took the bee-line home, which led me through some high grass and deep snow. Had a visitor for the night, who had already dined.

Saturday, January 7, 1871.—Snow on; got good stock of words, and was ready to start about 11 A.M. Bad storm, bad walking, got up tired; Grant's windows not open at 2 P.M.; afraid something was

wrong, but found that as yesterday was Christmas (Russian), the guests had not gone away till about 10 A.M. to-day. Asked Mrs. Grant if there were letters for me; 'No,' she said; then said, 'Yes, there is one, Mr. Hageman has it, and he has gone to Kiachta!' After a time Hageman came over to my lodgings and gave me a letter from home, dated November 16, 1870.

Sabbath, January 8, 1871.—Had a quiet day of it. Wrote to Sinclair and Paterson. Went to a christening in the evening.

Monday, January 9, 1871.—At Mongol. Lama (host) called on me in the afternoon. Found *Punch* and *Illustrated London News* at Grant's. After that a Selinginsk man came in, and we spoke of my intended trip to that place. He spoke Buriat, and I was sorry to find that I could make out very little of what he said. It was specially annoying after what Grant had been saying about getting up the language in two months. *Either he is wrong or I am slow.* 9 to 12. Read Macaulay on Warren Hastings, and slept little during the night.

Tuesday, January 10, 1871.—Did some Mongol, and started south for Mongolia about 11.30 A.M. Temperature very low, but as there was no wind it was not very cold. Had a good evening at it, and went to sleep about 11 P.M.

Wednesday, January 11, 1871.—Rose early, and

could scarcely wait out long enough to see the sun rise. The air decidedly cold. Took a short walk at noon. I am now at that stage of the language which tries the patience most. The common words I know, and the common forms of expression I know something of. I cannot see plainly the daily progress I make. Learning a language is like a ship going to China; sailing out of dock, down the Channel, past Lisbon is all very well, you see the progress, but when the land is left behind one wave is so like another, one day's view so like another, one week so like another, that one feels little progress being made. This is my case now. Went to bed about 11 P.M.

Thursday, January 12, 1871.—Slept till after the fire was lit. Got up refreshed after a good night of it. Morning dull; sun rose with a large rainbow arching it in the mist. Had a fair morning at it. Just as I was about to go for a walk in came a nondescript well-dressed man. He turned out to be the same that Grant spoke to me about before. He is a native of some place which speaks Buriat; he says he has studied at St. Petersburg. When he was at Grant's he tried to induce him to embark in a gold mine speculation about Tibet. He has for some time been residing at Irkutsk getting up some Tibetan. I think he came here to get me to give him lessons in English, but I'll take care to waste no

time on him. He is to call on me at my lodgings on Monday.

Friday, January 13, 1871.—To-day is New Year's day with the Russians. Here it is cold. Had a beggar to-day. Learned that my lama was married. He belongs to the marrying class of lamas. Afternoon there came a huge lama, poorly clad, and I suspect a beggar, though mounted. He belongs to the highest of the four grades of lamas, and wears the badge of his class in an affair worn at his left side. My host showed great respect to the visitor, inviting him to take the upper seat. The visitor refused, and for a time sat behind my host. At last the visitor complained of cold, and was persuaded to go up. Thus ended the contest. At night after dinner my host gave up his couch to the visitor and went to sleep in a neighbour's tent. I suspect that all the honour manifested for the guest is simply through respect for his literary attainments. He has a little of the mean manner of beggars, but also the bearing of a man of importance. He is a bit of a pedant; in asking my country he used a word for king which is found in books only.

Tuesday, January 17, 1871.—Started for Mongolia at 12 noon. Arrived 2.30. Tired. Found the lama out, away at Grant's. Found his brother in, but starting for the south, so that I may be permitted to go on a little further yet with Mongol. The

Russian force at Kiachta has been raised to upwards of a thousand ; it is said that they are going to take Urga. Felt very sleepy in the evening, but went on till 11 P.M. The lama in the tent turned out not to be his brother, but a workman.

Wednesday, January 18, 1871.—In the morning early heard the Russian bells sounding in honour of another saint's day. The man from Russia started back this morning after eating a dinner. He took a load of money with him, and almost a newspaper full of oral instructions, and a letter sewed to his shirt. Had a multitude of visitors to-day, and in the afternoon a pretentious gilling, a medical man who travels with a couple of camels. To make room for him my host banished himself to a neighbour's tent, where he was only half comfortable. I felt rather uneasy, as if I had not been here there would have been room for him. The gilling took possession of the couch with apparent satisfaction. I am determined to wait here as long as possible, as it is a good place for language, but should my host hint at the propriety of my going I'll be off. Sleepy in the evening.

Thursday, January 19, 1871.—Had a good morning at Mongol. Host went to Kiachta. I went to walk. Was cold. When my host came home he said that there were some days a little colder than this, but not much. This is consoling to me. I don't feel the cold much more than on some days, when he laughed,

and said it would be very much colder than this. This afternoon the doctor displayed and arranged his drugs and medicines. They are almost all dry vegetables, and bought from the Chinese at Urga. He had a cupping copper. A lighted paper is put into it, the cup is then placed on the skin, and sucks out by force of the air cooling. He was a little disappointed because I did not wonder enough at the contrivance. The only moist medicines I saw were two pots, which he confided to the care of my host. He has bells and pictures, and almost no end of things. He is an old man and toothless. In the afternoon had a visit from a young well-dressed lama from Gobi, who spoke a little Russian. He did not seem very willing to give an account of himself, and though well put on he did not refuse to take some flour from our Dogar on the sly. I came in before he got it quite stowed away.

Saturday, January 21, 1871.—Up early. Hot and cold during the night. Wind from the north-west, cold. Visit in the morning from the lama who has taken the courier contract from my host. Feel inclined to remain till to-morrow, but think I will go to Kiachta, as the tent is now crowded. On the way was overtaken by a man who took me into his sledge, had a fine ride home. Found a letter dated home, December 6.

Wednesday, January 25, 1871.—All astir early.

Warm to-day, all feel cheery at seeing the days lengthening and the weather becoming more warm Walked south, getting on slowly with the language Have spoken with my lama about going to Urga. He opened the conversation, he offers to take me with him when he goes in about fifty days. He says he will find good teaching and lodging for me in Urga. His tent is three-quarters of a day's ride to the south of Urga.

Friday, January 27, 1871.—Out in time to see the sun rise. Last night drove on at learning words till midnight, and slept poorly. I find that when I work late I don't sleep well. This is true of both Kiachta and Olau Bourgass.

Saturday, January 28, 1871.—Last night our host had to go to a neighbouring tent to sleep. We had also a wanderer housed with us. I am going to Kiachta contrary to my resolution. Feel particularly low-spirited on the way up, but my spirit revived soon.

Friday, February 3, 1871.—Yesterday evening, as they were melting water for supper, something was ladled out of the pot. A lama from a neighbouring tent who was in at the time pronounced it dog's dung, the two workmen handled it and at last threw it into the fire. I felt queer, and prayed that God would give me the stomach of a horse, as that seemed to me the only possible way of getting down dinner.

Dinner went down, and even a little tea after it. This forenoon when returning from my devotional walk in the morning, the sense of last night's dinner preparation came so strongly on me that I attempted a vomit and did not succeed, only because there was nothing to come up. To-day, again, as snow was being ladled out of the bag into the pot, another similar repulsive thing presented itself! It was examined, and turned out to be a piece of beef that had been left in the bag. The two men had put a lot of beef into the bag on leaving Urga, and had left some pieces in the bottom. Last night's scare was all hollow, and I am glad of it. Had rather a short day at Mongol, as I fell asleep early.

Saturday, February 4, 1871.—Roads very bad, the wind had blown the snow over the track and made walking difficult. Had Russian bath, and got a furious cold after it.

Sabbath, February 5, 1871.—Bad with the cold, and cold at heart too.

Tuesday, February 7, 1871.—Started about noon. Contrary to custom, passed through Mai mai Chen; the Yamen looks clean and neat. One Chinaman asked me in Russian what I wanted. I passed on and took no notice. Found things in the tent about as usual. The old woman's leg is out of joint, I guess, from the description given of it, but as it may be also broken, and at any rate is a difficult case, and

I have not been asked to take it in hand, I keep clear of it. I can never forget that all the doctors in the kingdom could not put Sir William Thomson right in a similar case, and if they can't do it I need not be rash in taking this in hand. Would I had a little medical knowledge. I intend to get some from Dr. Dudgeon when I go to Peking, should I ever see that city again.

Wednesday, February 8, 1871.—Yesterday there was a fierce wind on from the north, and to-day is cold. Hageman promised to come to-day, but I scarcely expect him. Fluctuation of feeling to-day.

Thursday, February 9, 1871.—Cold this morning with a fury. Hageman did not come yesterday. Will he come to-day?

Friday, February 10, 1871.—To-day the cold is intense, perhaps greater than I have seen it before. Hageman did not come yesterday, I don't expect him to-day; if he comes to-morrow I may return with him, if he does not come I may wait till Sabbath.

6 P.M. I have just listened with patience to a harangue from my lama, proving the folly of supposing the earth anything but what his god's book says it is. I listened the more patiently because I wanted to get more into his good books than I have been for the last few days. The speech was stopped by the servant placing a pot before him and laying in it an immense piece of beef.

Tuesday, February 14, 1871.—Posted letter, and set out for Mongolia. In Troitsko Safska warm, in Kiachta saw the Russian soldiers go through their drill. In Mongolia very cold wind. Found that since I left the servant Dogar had given up his situation and gone away for good. He complained of too much work, and I don't wonder at it. Coming down here to-day I met a suspicious-looking dog, and not long after I arrived there came about a mad dog, snapping at dogs and goats all about, but wise enough to avoid men. I have no doubt it was the same that I met. To-day I had no stick, and I am thankful for the deliverance. To-night we spoke about going to Urga, and I have hopes that I may be able to go with this man. He goes in about twenty days. To-night it is either excessively cold or I feel the cold more than usual. The mad dog came about several times during the evening, and it was anything but a pleasant sensation. Our lama made a new snib for the door on purpose to keep the creature out.

In the evening the large wooden vessel that holds the charcoal took fire, and after many ineffectual attempts to quench it it was at last put outside. In attempting to put it out all the water for supper was consumed, and the dinner was a mess. The night was very cold. Our lama went out about 8 P.M., and though we waited for him did not come in.

Wednesday, February 15, 1871.—To-day the morning was immensely cold. We had a little sensation in the forenoon over our lama's purse, which was lost. On coming into the tent in the morning I had found the servant, who was at that time the only one in the tent, arranging the felts. I remembered this, and my suspicion at once fell on him. I said nothing, and was glad of it after, for in a short time my lama found his money in his box. The sum in question was about 10*l.* English. Had a quiet, slow dull day, in which I fear little progress was made. Lama came back in the evening, saying that he had gone in vain. About 10 P.M. he went out to sleep in a neighbour's tent. Put on charcoal, was warm for once to-day and went to bed. Slept but indifferently, awoke, dreamt, &c. At last found my throat very sore, wrapped it closely round with my cravat, buttoned up my coat, slept, awoke well. Thank God for it. I prayed that if it was His will He might heal it, and He did heal it. God is better than a medicine chest. This I consider another answer to prayer. How base it would be in me to doubt Him after He has done so much for me!

I am working cures on the Mongols with brandy. They frequently have toothache and neuralgia. I give them a little to hold in their teeth, and they are better in a little. My brandy is reverenced as possessing magical properties.

Friday, February 17, 1871.—Shall I try and find out another tent to live in, or get a teacher up in Kiachta? Perhaps I could do good work there too, but I suspect that I can do better and easier among the people.

Saturday, February 18, 1871.—Went yesterday to Kiachta; no letter.

Sabbath, February 19, 1871.—Yesterday thought about my movements, read Macaulay's *History of England*, arranged with Hageman to take tea together on Tuesday evening. To-day set out for Olau Bourgass, turned back first for some money, had to turn again for my boots; they were so tight that I really could not walk with them, and by the time I got home I was at the last point of endurance, put on my top boots and walked along quietly. At first put on my blue eye-glasses, but the iron felt so cold that I could not endure it. When I got to the tent I found them busy about a feast; on drawing off my top boots I found the leg lined with a substance like snow. The steam from the foot being unable to get out any other way, came up the leg and froze in the process. On account of the feast I am likely to fare well for these two nights. The Mongols, I found, on the last day of the year eat seven dinners. This is more nominal than real. About the same quantity is eaten as usual, a little more perhaps. I was not quite up to the dodge, and

took more than the seventh part of a dinner at the first eating. I was, therefore, a little alarmed to find that an old fellow who was at my right was keeping count of my dinners. Fortunately he was called away to drink arika in a neighbour's tent. He did not come back till the next day, and I escaped with three dinners, which did not amount to more than one good dinner. At night the old offerings which had stood in the brass cups as offerings to Borhan during the whole of my residence here, were cleared out and fresh ones put in. Candles were also lighted. Mongolian candles: some twisted cotton is inserted in the bottom of a brass cup. There is a hole on purpose for it, and being of small height it stands upright. Melted butter is then poured in till the cup is full, and this makes a good light for a long time. Two large trenchers of bread cut into small pieces were also prepared and slightly mixed with sugar (in lumps) and Chinese dates. Chinese dates are miserable affairs. The outside is a bright, clear, and loud red, the edible part is like a bad sponge. There was also prepared a large quantity of *bauch*, of which the Mongols are immensely fond. Bauch is minced meat, mixed with minced vegetables and closed up in dough. As the frost was keen, these nuts were frozen hard in a short time and put into a bag. Two or three minutes' boiling was all that was needed to make a good dinner from them.

Monday, February 20, 1871.—Last night at 12 P.M. we passed from the year of the 'Horse' to the year of the 'Sheep.' This morning neighbours were astir early, and I, though after them, was not late. It was a grand morning. Nothing particular took place for some time. We all washed earlier than usual. The lama would be a little behind as usual, and even washed his handkerchief, though later on, when a man came to borrow his razor, he protested that it was contrary to all custom and use to shave the head on such a day. About 9 A.M. some neighbours came in and asked if we had not embraced yet. This stirred up our man. After a deal of fishing in a large box he extracted a new red coat, which had either never been worn before or only once. After he was properly dressed the embracing commenced. The whole tent's company, to the number of six or eight, stood up in the smoke and embraced. The embrace consists in one person putting the end of his coat sleeves on or under the end of his neighbour's coat sleeves. The proper thing is to have a *hatug* in the hands. Some can manipulate it gracefully, many dispense with it altogether. Everybody puts on his best cap for the day.

Having finished the tent's company we adjourned to our neighbour's. As he is rather a swell in his way, the tent was crowded. He was well on for drunk about 9.30 A.M., and as he was drinking hard

then he must either have got very drunk before noon, or be a man of large capacity. After finishing him we came back home, and I presented my teacher with a pocket-book I had bought in Troitsko Safska for *7s. 6d.*, and his brother with a pipe-lighting apparatus which cost me about *3s. 9d.* They seemed pleased, specially with the pipe-lighter, which I was afraid they would not care for, as it is a little more troublesome to manage than their simple flint and paper.

During the forenoon I entered almost every tent near, and went through the usual form. I was conducted by a young lama who is our neighbour, and was away all night assisting at a vigil service in a temple about twenty-one miles distant. The women were in high feather, not only having their best garments, but great and complicated hangings of silver work and beads, usually finished off with Russian silver coins about as large as a sixpence.

When a visitor enters he is expected in the first place to advance to the north side of the tent, that is the side farthest from the door, and pray. Two women whom I saw enter a tent did not go up, but a little way inside the door made three prostrations, making the forehead touch the ground every time. All the sacred things are displayed in the best possible order. There are numerous pictures, cups &c., many of which may be seen at any time. But

there are also special pictures and hangings not to be seen every day.

The candles are lighted. The most prominent thing is the offering, which consists of many different things. Mutton and bread form the bulk of the offering. The broad fat tail of a sheep forms an excellent centre piece. On the top of the heap, which sometimes is about the size of an ordinary portmanteau, is a bunch of bamboo slits like straws. On these are strung dates, and though the Mongols never saw a bunch of dates, their crown piece looks very like the bunches of dates which fruiterers in Britain exhibit in their windows. (I mean this. Sometimes on opening a box some straggling dates are found still adhering to the twigs; these twigs are tied together and stuck up, like this Mongol arrangement.) The ends of these bamboo sprigs are often crowned with walnuts. Walnuts and lumps of brownish sugar are also sprinkled over the heap. Sometimes a kind of silken hanging is put up before the whole of the sacred things, and when seen from the ends or through the slits in the curtain the thing looks much more taking. In one tent I saw among the offerings to Borhan a bottle of confections, which must have been bought at Grant's store for 2*s.* 6*d.* The confections were Scotch or English. This was a very sensible offering, as it will stand for a year and never get black with the smoke.

After praying, a visitor turns to the company, addressing first the master of the house. As he embraces each he says, 'Are you well?' When he has finished and sat down he asks each, 'Have you begun the new year well?' Each one says Yes, and asks the asker in turn. Then the master of the house hands him a plate or basin heaped with bread, fruit, butter, frozen milk, lumps of sugar, or with several of these twigs. The visitor then eats a small portion, drinks tea, drains a thimbleful of arika from the small cup, and is ready to leave for the next tent. Incense is kept burning during the day inside the tent, and is also placed outside in front on a clump of wood or a pile of frozen argol.

As to drinking: no one, as far as I know, carries a bottle with him as in Scotland, but it is offered as a rule in every tent. Before it is taken it is poured into a small metal vessel and heated in the fire. The cups are so very small that I question much if a man could possibly get drunk on one cup in every tent, though he spent the day most diligently. A visitor will remain ten minutes on an average in every tent; the tents are seldom quite close, a minute or two's walk between, even at a settlement, and then these may sometimes be twenty minutes' ride in the open air. These things would keep a man fresh. But men get drunk. They don't confine themselves to one cup, they take many, and after getting a little

drunk discard the small cup altogether and pour the spirit into their wooden tea-cups. They seem able to carry an immense quantity of the stuff. I saw one blackman, i.e. not a lama, to-day who imbibed quantities of it. I met him in tent after tent, and then he was pouring the arika into his silver-covered drinking cup, the picture of half-intoxicated good nature, and seeming never to get any nearer to dead drunk. I saw two men dead drunk; one was a father who came to our tent with his two children. He could not go home, and his bairns tried to get him up and away. He was at last quartered into a neighbour's tent. The other was a young man on horseback. He was insensible for a good while before he got off, vomiting, &c. We picked him up and deposited him in a tent. The Mongols scour the country to-day in parties of from three to ten, all mounted, and many of them are very far gone, though they perform wonderful feats of horsemanship, the greatest wonder being that they don't come down every minute. It is astonishing to see how they keep the saddle.

7.30 P.M.—I have got rid of a poor good-natured drunken fellow who would insist on my taking his tobacco five or six times and smoking his pipe as often. Drunkenness developed in him the deferential and worshipful tendency of his nature till it became a bore. About 10 P.M. the lama's old brother came

in drunk, but in such a frame of mind that his drunkenness was amusing rather than anything else. I went to bed at 11 P.M., but I understand that Deinbril came in after that, and cleared out a lot of my few remaining cigarettes.

Tuesday, February 21, 1871.—I understand that my lama goes south in three days. I am going up to Kiachta this morning. If there be no passport I will stay there to-night, and come to-morrow or the day after for my things. If there be a passport I'll set about starting, though the cold is great. To-day the breath of the cold is flowing in white. Lost a pencil last night. Got to Kiachta, and after going several times caught Hageman at home.

Thursday, February 23, 1871.—Started for Mongolia *shortly after nine; found that my lama had* been unwell yesterday, and that he was not going south for seven days. My passport may come in time yet, I don't know. Another mad dog reported about. The older brother came home drunk, but did not vomit during the night. I find that my lama is not going for four or five days yet, but I'll go home to-morrow, as all is in confusion here through the bustle of packing. A man came up riding on an ox. He turned out to be the scholar of the same teacher with my lama. My man asked with the greatest respect for his teacher, and received a small present from him with great reverence. The new-comer is

going into Kiachta with a number of ox-carts full of hides. He is a decent-looking man, but does not appear to have profited by his tuition so much as my man, as he does not read Mongol. He knows Tibetan.

Friday, February 24, 1871.—Up early this morning; sun rose well; weather cold, though the Mongols say it is fine and warm. Great strife this morning between my lama and one of his courier lamas. I take the part of the courier, but say nothing. Grant's tarantass was to come for me this morning. It did not come till 2 P.M.; I had begun to think it was not coming at all. The reason of its being so late was that a Russian officer had it, and was careless enough not to return it at the time. It was high time for me to leave Mongolia. They were packing up, and though I was still learning much from them, yet I felt in the way, and every night that I remained in this tent my teacher had to go out and sleep in a neighbour's hut. I was well entreated to-day, and was presented by the two brothers with a silk girdle. I hesitated at first to receive it, as I was afraid it had some connection with their religion, but when they said it was merely a present I took it. This evening we went to see a collection of insects and precious stones which was made up by the husband of a now widowed lady. Butterflies were of all sorts and from all parts of the world. It must have been no slight

matter to get them together by post. The collector was a schoolmaster, and got the foreign insects in exchange for Siberian specimens. The stones he picked up, sent them up the country and had them ground. They are very fine, some of them.

Saturday, February 25, 1871.—Rose 7 A.M.; went to church; called on Dashe; did not begin Mongolian till 11 A.M. During my stay in Kiachta I have read a good many English books from Grant's library. Grant has a great many books on Mongolia, and as a member of the Geographical Society he intends to study Mongolian for the purpose of translating a Buriat book of ancient laws.

My stay in Olau Bourgass has been from December 14, 1870, till February 24, 1871, not a continued stay, but after four or five days in Mongolia coming up here and staying two or three nights. Walked and read a good deal to-day. Did not study much. My lama visited me to-day and presented me with a *hatug*, or silken girdle, and four cakes of soap. *Punch* for two weeks came in to-day, no letters for me. Felt so sleepy at night that I could not work. I hoped to be with Hageman during the evening, but he had to go out on business.

Sabbath, February 26, 1871.—Rose 7 A.M. Day promises to be warm and a snow-melter. Feel a little sorry that, in consequence of the non-arrival of my Chinese passport, I cannot start in this fine

weather. However, I pray that God may help me to make the most of my time here. May His grace shine upon me to-day, and make me feel that, though alone and far away, I am yet one in the great family in earth and heaven. Though I am slow to admit it, still I must admit that to be alone thus is a trial to the soul of a man. The reception of a letter from some friend makes a wonderful change in all around.

Grant came home to-day in the afternoon. A boy whom he took with him has had the toes frozen off one foot. He is in the hospital at some Russian town up the country. It is expected that he will be able to walk after his foot heals. This rather made me less impatient about starting for Urga. Perhaps it is a merciful preservation for me that my passport has been detained. Went to bed early.

Tuesday, February 28, 1871.—Had a visit from Dogar and Mahser, two Mongols, the former lately a servant in the tent where I lodged, the latter a young lama in a neighbouring tent. They were up at Troitsko Safska with two ox-cart loads of fuel, which they said they sold for half a rouble each. They were going home when they called on me. While they were drinking tea with me some one took the wheels off one of the carts and rolled them away out of sight. They were easily found. This is a common trick among Russian schoolboys. The Mongols seem to take it as a matter of course. Dogar had

the impudence to beg money from me, though I gave him before two roubles. I told him that I had already given him enough, and would give him no more. He says, when I go to Urga he will go with me, but I am determined if possible he shall not. He speaks Southern Mongolian very slowly and distinctly, and as such is useful to me in the language. I think now that, should my passport come soon, I shall go off at once, and not wait so long as I intended.

Wednesday, March 1, 1871.—Yesterday Dashe Buriat did not come. I called on him in the evening, and found him at home. He promised to bring my teacher last night or this morning. It is now 4 P.M. and he has not come. I feel a little annoyed, and would feel more annoyed if I had not plenty of work on hand. I hope that my passport may come soon, as I am anxious to get away. However, from the past I ought to trust God for the future. God has helped me in many things, and will help me. I am reading over the small bookfuls of words I wrote in Mongolia, but am so impressed with the superiority of learning the language among the people that I am impatient already to be off and away for Urga. I cannot help thinking that, even though I was almost tired of the thing before when I was in Mongolia, and then thought that I could be profitably employed in Kiachta learning well the phrases and sentences I

then took down, the sooner I am off and away the better.

Sabbath, March 12, 1871.—Had a walk before breakfast, and found that without coat and gloves I could stand the cold without much or any inconvenience. Cold in heart yesterday, and this morning. Oh that God would give me food from heaven in the wilderness! I am eager to know whether the Chinese post brings my passport or not, and also desirous of being able to leave the matter in a spirit of trust to God, and to try and feel that whether it comes or does not come it is best. It is easy to sing

Thy way, not mine, O Lord!

but it is more difficult to live and feel this out in one's life.

Early in the day Mahser, a young lama in a tent near to where I lived in Mongolia, the same who piloted me about among the tents on the first day of the Mongol New Year, called on me. He was going with a companion and four carts of firewood up to the bazaar. After having sold them, the two tied up their oxen outside my gate and came in to drink tea with me. Two Cossacks made off with one of the oxen and carts, but they were found after a little trouble. While in the young lama asked what was in my New Testament. I explained shortly to him the life and work of Christ, and dwelt particularly on

the hope of meeting friends in the next life. I like to dwell on this doctrine to the Mongols, because it stands out in strong contrast with their doctrine of perpetual rebirth. The Mongols also wonder that I can find it in my heart to be so long separated from my father and mother and other friends. I try to impress on them that I hope to see them in the next life, and therefore can afford to be away from them in this life.

CHAPTER IV

A VISIT TO A MONGOL LAMA

DURING one of his many long periods of waiting while official technicalities prevented his journeying, James Gilmour, shortly after his return in 1871 from a trip to Lake Baikal, paid a visit to a large temple not very distant from Kiachta. He has left us the following description of his visit:—

Friday, March 31, 1871.—As we came near, it was plain that the temple was imposing. The houses about were of Russian build. One had a green door and green window-shutters, and as this was the residence of the lama's Russian interpreter we made for it. I noticed, as we drove up to the settlement, my teacher spoke in a subdued tone. I wish he had always been near a big lama. Sometimes he spoke so loudly that it almost shook even my nerves to listen to him. We dismounted at the gate, and entered the house. The antechamber was not neat. Bedding and cushions were piled up in confusion, but the rest of the house was the most attractive Buriat establishment I have yet seen. It was divided

into two parts; in the one sat the lama, resplendent in a quite new gown of yellow with fine furred sleeve ends. Before him was a low narrow Chinese table with a knife, some paper, pens, and books. He had just been writing when we entered. At his left hand in the corner were books, at his right a succession of cushions. That cushion at his right had four thicknesses, the one beyond three, the one beyond two, and so on.

My teacher made his worship, and was seated three or four cushions down from the lama. After some delay a chair was set for me, and after some more delay a carpet was placed upon it, and I sat down. Conversation began, but as it was mostly confined to my teacher I employed myself examining the contents of the chamber. Up the middle of the apartment ran a light railing; behind this was a neatly arranged library, with the usual brass ornaments placed before the Borhan. The clean and neat appearance of the house struck me forcibly. Tea was brought in, and I was indignant to find that the servant was ordered to offer first to my Buriat and then to me. This I never saw done before. The translator did not seek to carry on much conversation with me, but spoke much to my Buriat. I did not like much of his conduct at all. The head lama was said not to be at home, but as we went out to visit the temple we heard he had come back. During the

tea drinking in the interpreter's house I had seen him return seated on one of the little Russian gigs, followed by a Buriat attendant on a white horse.

The head lama I found in different gear from his interpreter. The house was not neat, it was hardly clean. The man himself was not so tidy. He was much more free and friendly. He had exactly the face of Dr. Reynolds, of Cheshunt College, and much of his manner. His warmth when he spoke and smiled was that of Dr. Reynolds exactly. He also wore spectacles. He was dressed in a good red coat. He had not the red scarf that all the underlings wore. He shook hands with me and blessed the others in the usual style; that is, took from his bosom a book bound up in cloth and touched the people's heads with it. Sometimes to save trouble the book was laid on a Chinese table, and the worshippers touched the book or the edge of the table with their head. Tea was served up, and I was served before my Buriat.

I again asked to see the temple, and we went out. The inside of the temple was larger than that at Ana, but not so richly painted and hung with decorations. Approaching the front door all prostrated themselves at a distance from the door.

The interpreter and myself did not prostrate ourselves. All were bareheaded but myself. I saw no one put on a hat near the temple. I put on mine,

remarking to the yellow lama that I could not stand the sun, which was so strong. He admitted it was hot, and covered his head with his scarf. Inside the temple was cold, intensely cold, so cold that to come out again the air outside felt like summer, though there was the large frozen lake so near. The temple was much like the others. There were two offerings to the god. They were placed on the fifteenth of the Tsagan month. They were made of sugar of all colours. The device was dragons, scenes, &c. They were skilfully made. An immense quantity of sugar must have been used. There was also in the temple an immense praying machine hung round and round with silk girdles. The man in yellow set the example, and all as they passed gave it a turn. It is self-registering. A bell rings at every half-turn.

Went back and dined in Buriat Russian style in the lama's house, or one of his houses, for his houses are many. Had more conversation of all kinds. Was commissioned by him to take his compliments to the Grants. He had called on them when they were on their late trip north. At this sitting we were joined by the lama second in rank. He was a fat jolly fellow, talked incessantly, and was well informed. He knows Russian to read it, and asked me about the famous diamond, the 'Fountain of Light.' He knew its history. He asked me if I had seen it. I could not remember whether or not I had

seen it among the crown jewels. This jolly fellow seems to have been at the missionary school in Selinginsk, and to the great amusement of the company repeated part of the Lord's Prayer. I think everyone laughed. We had more talk. At an earlier time of the day the Hamba lama made bare his arm almost to the elbow, and behold, it was a discoloured mass, covered with bloodshot pimples! In spite of this I liked the fellow, and would have accepted his invitation to spend the night if I had known, as I afterwards learned, that the invitation was not merely formal. My Buriat told me I could have done nothing that would have pleased him more than to accept his invitation. I left about 4 P.M.

On the way back I thought of something. When in Mongolia I learned that the Mongolian geography of the world was so much at fault, and that their preposterous statement of the form of the earth was made on the same inspired or divine authority as the rest of the contents of the sacred books, I thought I had found a means of attacking Buddhism. If these people could be brought to know that the world was round, seeing their book false in one particular would not this shake their confidence in the rest of the book? To-day I found this hope a mistake. The lamas through their contact with Russia know and admit the shape of the earth, yet

hold to their books, which they must know teach the contrary. Probably they say little on this subject. For the conversion of the Mongols there seems to be no human device left but teaching, personal influence, and prayer. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.'

CHAPTER V

KIACHTA

IN approaching from the south the first that the traveller sees of Kiachta is its great and lofty church, magnificent with domes and dazzling with white, standing on high ground, towering aloft and looking away out over the plains of Mongolia, as if bidding defiance to all the Buddhist temples, and saying, 'I am coming to claim the land.' Unlike the majority of the Buddhist temples, it looks grand even on close inspection, and well it might, having been built by the merchants, it is said, at a cost of half a million roubles, over sixty thousand pounds.

Kiachta is situated close to the frontier line that divides China and Russia, and consists of warehouses, governor's residence, and merchants' houses, with a population numbering not more than a few hundreds. The traveller is surprised at the smallness of the place, but soon learns that some three miles farther inland is a Russian town called Troitsko Safska, with a population of some two or three thousand, perhaps more than that even, where are situated the post and

telegraph offices, where are the homes of most of those engaged in the international trade of the place, and where, in all probability, the traveller will have to go if he wishes to find lodgings.

What interested me most on my arrival at Troitsko Safska was to find that two of its residents were British subjects, namely Mr. Grant, a Scotchman, and his assistant, Mr. Hageman, an Englishman. It has been said that, when the north pole is reached, a Scotchman will be found sitting astride of it, and it was a striking instance of Scotch enterprise and perseverance to find Mr. Grant settled in a prosperous business in this remote frontier of Siberia, married to a Russian lady of position, and surrounded by a family of thriving and beautiful children. From Mr. and Mrs. Grant I received the greatest kindness, being entertained by them both in Kiachta and at their country house, where I had opportunities of studying the Buriat language among the natives. Mr. Hageman I found equally kind, and many were the good offices he performed for me during my stay in Troitsko Safska. Mr. Grant had a large business, embracing many branches, but he went first to Kiachta to establish a courier agency across the Mongolian desert, by which means telegrams, sent from London to Kiachta by wire, were forwarded by horsemen across the desert or conveyed by Chinese couriers from Kalgan to Tientsin, whence they were

taken by steamer to Shanghai. When I visited Kiachta the more direct telegraphic communication with London had not been established, and the Mongolian couriers were still riding over the desert with the 'swift letter.' A wealthy Mongol was contractor, had horses in waiting at certain stations along the route, and when a mail arrived from north or south, the tired rider, throwing himself from his exhausted horse, handed the packet to his waiting comrade, who, mounted on a fresh steed, which for the most part stood ready saddled, was soon hurrying over the plain. Horses were frequently changed, but a rider was supposed to hold out for a day and a half or two days, and had orders, it would seem, to drink as much tea as he liked or could get, but was forbidden to eat food, lest he should get drowsy or fall asleep and detain the mail. The stipulated time from Kalgan to Kiachta was about eight days, and there was a fine exacted for extra delay.

The weekly couriers were pretty regular in the time of their despatch, and, being expected at the various stations, were waited for; but, in addition to these regular mails, special telegrams could be sent at any time by special couriers, and the sudden arrival of one of these at a station where things were not in readiness acted like an electric shock on the inhabitants. Immediately there was shouting, running, and hustling about. The horse was to saddle,

perhaps even to catch. Loss of time meant loss of silver, and a short interval was sufficient to fit out a man and horse and send off the little packet. When the mail was fairly off the assistant Mongols would slowly re-enter their tent, wondering again whatever could be the contents of that mysterious little parcel which was of such importance that foreigners were willing to pay so handsomely for its rapid transmission. The laying of submarine cables put an end to all this, and the trans-Mongolian telegrams are now a thing of the past.

One of the first places visited in Troitsko Safska was the post office, where I found letters awaiting me. During my stay I had frequent occasion to revisit it, and the ceremonious process to be gone through in posting letters in this Siberian town would rather astonish those accustomed to drop mail matter into letter-boxes in Britain. The door in the porch opened into a hall, where hat, gloves, and overcoat had to be left. Divested of these it was permitted to enter the office, where it was necessary to behave as in a drawing-room, first saluting and shaking hands with the postmaster, then sitting down to the important business of posting a letter! This business concluded, hand shaking, salutation and leaving had again to be performed; then it was permitted to leave the presence of the portrait of the Emperor which graced the room, and in deference to

which it was supposed that such formal constraint reigned in the place, and resuming the garments left in the hall, the visitor was at liberty to pass the soldier on guard and depart, wondering what the postmaster would think and say if he could visit London and see the hurry and bustle at the central post office towards closing time.

But though the ceremonious nature of posting a letter at Kiachta may be amusing, the Russian postal system is complete and convenient, and the rate not expensive. In the empire itself money in the shape of rouble notes can be safely and expeditiously conveyed to all parts in registered letters, and from Kiachta regular mails are run across the desert to Urga, Kalgan, and Tientsin, carrying letters three times a month, and books and bullion once a month. The 'heavy mail,' as it is called, which carries money and valuables, is escorted by two soldiers, but the ordinary mail, which leaves every ten days, is entrusted to native couriers. The postage is cheap, and residents in Kalgan, Peking, and Tientsin, by availing themselves of this Russian mail, can communicate with America, Britain, and postal union countries generally, for seven kopecks, or twopence halfpenny per letter of half an ounce.

Troitsko Safska, like Kiachta and most Siberian towns, is built almost entirely of wood. Good houses have double windows, and with the great brick stoves

and unlimited supplies of fuel the interiors are very warm. The stove fire is lit only once a day, and the mass of masonry heated up to such an extent that it keeps hot for twenty-four hours. Russians in Siberia, when they go out in winter, cover themselves head and body with furs, and thrust their feet into great warm over-boots, but indoors clothe lightly, and warm up their houses to a degree that is uncomfortable to a European ; and though the firing of the apartments in which I established myself after returning from Mr. Grant's country house was included in the rent, I had a continual struggle with my landlady to get my rooms kept cool enough, and it was only after repeated and vigorous remonstrances, made sometimes in pantomime, sometimes through the kind offices of an interpreter, that I succeeded in having the temperature lowered far enough to be endurable.

My landlady was an aged widow, who lived in the house with her three unmarried daughters, the youngest of whom seemed past middle life. To oblige me they fired my stove less than their own, and the difference of warmth between my part of the house and theirs was so great that they often seemed to shrink from the cold as they entered my room.

The most lively part of Troitsko Safska is the bazaar, the front of which consists of a range of rather imposing buildings, stores in which large parts of the contents exposed for sale are of European

manufacture. The rest of the shops are little more than stalls, and about half of these are held by Chinese. The signs and advertisements are, for the most part, printed in Russian, Mongolian, Chinese, and Tibetan; and in the shops, stalls, or open stands may be bought all the necessaries and many of the comforts of life. Among the many articles exposed in winter for sale that which appears most curious to the stranger is milk frozen in shapes like cheese, and sold at so much per mould.

The inhabitants of Troitsko Safska are mostly Russians. There are Buriats not a few, but they live in houses like Russians and speak the Russian language. No doubt numbers of the inhabitants are exiles who, in place of being sent to prison, are condemned to expiate their crime by living in Siberia. All these are under the eye and control of the police-master. He knows the history of their cases, but keeps the secret, and residents employ men whom they know to be banished as criminals, but of whose crimes they can learn nothing more than the individuals themselves choose to divulge, and it is to be supposed that many who are communicative enough to tell anything of their history are guilty of acts more serious than they state in their narratives. An inconvenience necessarily arising from Siberia being in so far as it is a penal settlement, is, that no one, bond or free, is at liberty to leave the neighbourhood

of his abode and travel to any great distance without first notifying the police-master and obtaining his consent. Among some of the back streets were visible Jewish signs, but whether these Israelites were criminals or adventurers I did not learn.

It is said that of those who come on compulsion many remain from choice, and thus it may happen that many of the native-born population of Siberia are the descendants of those who, in the first instance, were sent there for their crimes, and if we leave political cases out of consideration altogether, a great deal may be said in favour of this system of punishing wrong-doers. Suppose that some young man in some Russian city, led astray by bad companions, gambles, embezzles his employer's money, is prosecuted and condemned for it. Is he not better circumstanced, and has he not more opportunity of retrieving himself by being sent to a Siberian town than he would have if he became the inmate of a jail? Siberia is cold in winter, and its population is sparse and scattered, but it is in itself a fine country, healthy and plentiful, and it is said that military officers who have lived fast and spent too much money often seek Siberia appointments, that they may recover themselves. The main part of the suffering endured by any convict relegated to such a part of Siberia as that around Kiachta—that is, supposing he finds suitable employment—must be

the thought that he cannot leave the place, a condition of residence which would disenchant the most desirable of countries, and make one's native land itself unendurable. Leaving, therefore, as said above, political banishment altogether out of the question, Russia might with great reason contend that in sending criminals to Siberia, while she punishes crime with no light hand, she neither crushes nor debases the criminal, and gives him facilities for returning to respectability which more civilised countries find it difficult to afford to such as transgress their laws.

In many Siberian towns the most prominent architectural features are the churches, and one of the most noticeable characteristics in the social life of the Siberian Russians is the great number of holy days which they observe. I was informed that, as a rule, in addition to Sundays there are about three holy days to every two weeks; that is, counting Sundays, about one day in three is considered sacred. This may be an exaggeration, but holy days recur so frequently that, in making business arrangements, it is always well to make sure the proposed date is not a holy day. In addition to public holy days there are numerous holy or semi-holy days observed in families, such as name days, and on one occasion a concurrence of public and private holy days delayed some domestic arrangements of my landlady from Friday

of one week till Saturday of the week following. The evening before any holy day is also considered sacred, and I used to know when the following day was a festival by coming in to my room in the evening and seeing the lamp, which hung in front of the metallic picture in the corner, trimmed and burning. So largely does observance of holy days enter into the social life of the Russians as seen in Siberia, that there may be some truth in the saying which would have it that Russia has not reformed her calendar, but dates her time twelve days behind the rest of the world, because any attempt at changing to the new style would be resented by the ignorant as an attempt to shorten their lives by the number of days in question, and by the pious as a defrauding of the saints whose anniversaries would thus be passed over without celebration.

This overdoing of religious days is followed by just such results as might be expected. Attempting to observe too many, none are observed well, and Sunday is considered as nothing more than one in a crowd of holy days, none of which are kept sacred. The religious part of the observance of any holy day seems to consist in attending church, after which the busy man goes to his business, and those who have time on their hands betake themselves to cards.

The inhabitants of Kiachta and Troitsko Safska are a highly convivial people; the drinking of the tea,

for the import of which the place is famous, seems in no way to lessen the consumption of spirits; social gatherings seldom break up till very late, frequently not till morning, and on some occasions are prolonged into the forenoon. Cards seem indispensable at every party, and it is said that very large sums of money sometimes change hands in a single night.

All the world has heard of the Russian bath, and a bath-house formed part of the belongings of almost every house of consequence in Troitsko Safska. After a delay occasioned by a succession of holy days, the bath-house belonging to my landlady was heated up for my use, and, with an old Buriat as attendant, I repaired to it, curious to experience sensations I had heard so much about. The bath-house was a little low hut standing in the courtyard separate from all the other buildings. Its great brick stove had been fired up during the afternoon, and on entering it from the bitter cold of the court-yard the heat felt stifling. The main piece of furniture which the room contained was a stand such as greengrocers have for displaying their vegetables, this one having only two shelves, one at a moderate height and one high up near the ceiling. Following directions I had before received, and the instructions of my old Buriat, I was soon stretched on the upper bench, while my attendant kept the hot air in contact with me in rapid circulation by briskly moving a

broom of birch twigs with the leaves on. From time to time water was thrown on the hot stove, the little room was filled with steam, and I was perspiring from every pore. By-and-by, supposing that I had enough, I descended, and was about to dress, when suddenly I felt so ill and queer in the head that I could only put on my overcoat and slippers, run across the court, and rush up to my room, being almost unconscious by the time that I reached it. Some tea soon revived me, to the great relief of poor old landlady, who was afraid that I was about to die on her hands. The mischief had been caused by the chimney of the bath-house stove being closed before the wood was sufficiently burned away, a device by means of which the requisite heat was raised with a saving of fuel, but the gas from the glowing charcoal in place of escaping was confined in the room, ready to do its subtle work.

The same economical device practised at another time on the stove in my lodgings produced a like effect, only much more slowly and gradually. I was reading with my Buriat teacher when the gas began to take effect, and the sensation produced was peculiar. The Mongols, in describing the sensation of numbness, are very fond of saying that they feel just as if the limb affected was not part of their own body, but belonged to some one else. This was exactly the feeling with regard to the intellectual

faculties that marked the growing power of the poisonous gas. First, thinking was an effort, then at intervals all control of the thinking faculties would be lost, consciousness, however, remaining; and these symptoms went on increasing till, suspecting the cause, I rushed out into the open air, the last and only cure for poisoning by charcoal.

During my residence in Troitsko Safska I had the fortune to experience an earthquake, not an infrequent phenomenon, it would seem, in Siberia. While lying in bed about six o'clock in the morning, all of a sudden a terrible commotion arose in the house. Knowing that three soldiers who were billeted on my landlady occupied a small room immediately under mine, my first half-awake idea was that these three men of war had quarrelled, seized each other by the throat, and were making the whole fabric of the house vibrate by the violence with which they were banging each other against the wooden partitions that bounded their narrow quarters. A few seconds more of increasingly violent shaking made it manifest that the cause was deeper than the room below, and the vibration soon became so violent that sand was shaken down from the joints of the boards that formed the ceiling of the room. As the quaking did not cease, but went on increasing, and it seemed just possible that the tall brick stove might be thrown down on to the foot of my bed, I jumped

up, and in my great-coat rushed downstairs into the yard, where I met a native, who, walking unconcernedly past, seemed much more startled by my unexpected appearance than by the earthquake. The motion having now ceased I returned to my room, and found the oil lamps hung by chains in front of the sacred pictures swinging about violently. The natives said that a second and more violent shock might be expected, but none came.

As most of the inhabitants of Siberian towns live in log-built houses, earthquakes cause them no uneasiness, the construction of their dwellings being such that, though thrown almost over on their side, the inmates would not, except for the brick stoves and furniture, be in much danger of being crushed, and instances may be seen of people living quietly and permanently in houses which have sunk down on one side and tilted over to a degree far beyond that at which any stone or brick-built house could be held together. Churches are, for the most part, built of brick; there are also a few houses of similar construction, and when great earthquakes come these suffer, while the ordinary log houses escape.

This wooden architecture, combined with the great dryness which characterises the climate of the country round Kiachta, renders the towns liable to suffer more from fire than earthquakes, and it is no uncommon thing for a Siberian, rich in house

property, to be made comparatively poor in one night by some great fire reducing whole streets to ashes. A great part of Kiachta, it was said, had been burned to the ground some time before I visited it, and both Kiachta and Troitsko Safska had an efficient fire brigade, and a signal station on high ground between the two, by means of which the engines of the one town could be instantly summoned to assist in subduing any fire that broke out in the other.

The ignorant populace, and even many who ought to know better, have a practice of suspecting strangers of being the origin of any fires that may break out in the towns where they reside, and I was duly warned not to be a spectator of any conflagration that might take place, a warning that was rendered all the more impressive since it was supported by an instance in which a stranger, looking at a fire, had run some considerable risk of being himself thrown into the flames. Happily no great fire took place while I was in Troitsko Safska, though I frequently heard the rush of the engines passing my lodging. They may have succeeded in subduing the beginnings of fires, but more probably their frequent turn-outs were in response to false alarms given by the authorities on purpose to keep the men in practice and at their post, by testing the rapidity with which they could present themselves at any given place when suddenly called upon by night or day.

CHAPTER VI

MONGOLIAN METEOROLOGY

THE first thing that a traveller going to Mongolia meets is the wind from the plateau. The wind is from the plateau, but it receives its special character from the high ridge of hills which, rising away above the plain itself, forms the south boundary of the table land. Except in midsummer and early autumn, the probabilities are that these hills are, partly at least, covered with snow, and the blast from them is chilling.

Getting nearer to Mongolia, at the very foot of the great pass over which must struggle all the traffic between Mongolia and Kalgan, the traveller, himself sheltered, may sit and hear the tempest roar away high up above him, and see at no great distance from him a stream of gravel stones pour, like water, down the face of a steep cliff. The force of the wind is so great that it dislodges the gravel, and sends it hurrying downwards in a noisy current. On reaching the higher level of the pass the whole force of the blast is met, and the storm is sometimes so violent

that progression of any kind is difficult. The dust from the road comes in bitter clouds, blinding and bewildering man and beast, and it is only when well clear of the pass, and away down the other side towards the plain, that any sensible abatement of its fury is felt.

In Mongolia itself the air is seldom at rest. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter, day and night, wind is abundant. There *are* times, perhaps even days, when there is little or no wind, but these times are rare, these days are few and often far between. It is much more common to have consecutive days of unintermitted blowing. The prevailing direction of the wind seems to be from the north-west, but it blows from all quarters, and just as likely as not, when you have pitched your tent facing southwards a south wind will pipe up, persistently blow in at the tent-door, prevent the egress of the smoke, and compel you to abandon your tent or your fire.

Of all the places in the world wind has perhaps the freest course in Mongolia. There is nothing to obstruct its range. No trees, no bushes, no houses, nothing to entangle and hinder it. Away it goes over plain and hill, running straight on, swirling round, shaking the short grass, driving clouds of dust from the roads and dried-up lakes, and meeting no impediment till it falls with full fury on the

quivering tent of the hapless traveller. Woe betide the tent that is not firmly pinned down when the blast comes. A good tent can stand it, but people travelling with poor tents sometimes take down their tent altogether when a great storm comes, weather it out as best they can unprotected, and set up their tent again when the weather moderates.

As to the felt tents in which Mongols live permanently, they stand the wind better. Being heavy they stand firmer, and being packed with boxes inside are not in much danger of moving. But in Mongolia there come sometimes furious whirlwirds, roaring and spinning with great velocity over the plain, and to provide against being carried away by them every dwelling tent is provided with a strong hair rope fastened to the highest part and stowed away handy, within reach, so that at a moment's notice, when the roar is heard coming over the plain, the inmates can pull it down and hang on to it, to prevent their little foundationless house from being taken up as a man lifts a hat from a table. These ropes, however, are very seldom used. Occasionally a tent may be found moored down by this rope fastened to a pin driven into the tent floor; but, on the other hand, in most cases these ropes are furnished with a coating of soot and smoke varnish, which indicate that they have not been disturbed for months.

Spring is the great time for persistent winds, and as the cold is then still great, the cattle still weak, and no new grass yet grown, many of the animals die. But though the winds moderate, they do not stop all through May. In June even a two or three days' hurricane may come along, and it is not till July and August that the atmosphere gets quiet and reliable. One of the few redeeming features of Mongolian winds is that many of them, though persistent during the day, get quiet or altogether disappear in the night. This remark of course does not apply to the more violent winds, which generally hold at it night and day.

The whirlwind is a great feature in the landscape of Mongolia. The country is so wide and bare that the traveller can see it at great distances, and in summer time, away up about Gobi, several whirlwinds may be seen at a time, each marked by a huge perpendicular column of brown sand reaching to a great height, leisurely traversing the vast plain and visible, as it may be, for more than an hour before they finally disappear. The column of sand is of course not solid, but merely of the consistency of a cloud, and though in a sandy country they have a most formidable appearance, they are in most cases, in summer especially, perfectly harmless. Sometimes, though, even in summer a whirlwind of a different character may be seen, in which the column is not a

thin cloud of loose sand reaching high into the air, but a great dark solid-looking pillar reaching from the ground right up into low-lying dark clouds.

The Mongols have a firm belief that the thunder is the voice of a dragon, and when interrogated affirm boldly having seen the dragon itself. An incredulous foreigner was once called out of his tent that he might, with his own eyes, look upon the dragon he would not believe in. Turning towards the direction pointed out, sure enough there was something wonderfully like a beast's tail depending from the clouds, and as the thing moved a little hither and thither it required no great stretch of imagination to think that some great beast lay crouched in the black cloud, wagging its tail, which then hung through and was seen from below. The Mongol account of this phenomenon was twofold. Some said it was the dragon's tail; others, approaching nearer the real explanation, said it was not the beast's tail, but the beast drawing up water. These little pendent columns of vapour, abortive waterspouts, as they may be called, are frequently seen hanging from dark clouds in Mongolia, and powerfully move the superstitious sensibilities of the more timid among the Mongols.

The dust storm is another peculiarity of Mongolia. At times, when the wind blows, the whole atmosphere presents a hazy appearance. Nothing at any distance is seen distinctly. The sun even looks dull. Yet

there is nothing visible to cause this dimness. It is a storm of dust so fine that it is perceived only by its general effect. No dust settles on the person or clothes; it is too fine in quality and too minute in quantity for that, but after all it is dust that is caught up by the wind in some far-off region and carried over to Mongolia. These dust storms are very different from the dust storms that may be seen sweeping over the plain of Peking. In the latter you can see and feel the dust. Comparatively speaking, they are coarse, vulgar dust storms. The Mongolian dust storm is a refined phenomenon, the dusty ingredients being almost impalpable. That the atmospheric discoloration is dust admits of no doubt. After the wind ceases to blow the dust settles on the grass, when, though it hardly admits of handling, it can be distinctly seen.

On one occasion in summer the rear man of a caravan shouted out, 'The rain is on us.' There was instantly a bustle of getting on rain cloaks, all the more animated as the rain seemed very heavy, rapidly nearing, and almost up to the caravan. One old Mongol looked at it a moment, remarked, 'There is such a thing as red rain after all,' and hurried on his cloak. A few moments more and the storm broke over the caravan, but in place of being a thunder shower, it turned out to be nothing more than the beginning of a dust storm, somewhat different in its

beginning from ordinary dust storms, and so like rain as to deceive even the practised eye of an old Mongol.

Rain may be mentioned next in order. June, July, and August are the rainy months in Mongolia. The seasons are not quite alike in all years, but there is seldom much rain before the middle of June, and frequently little rain after the middle of August. In this way the real rainy season of Mongolia does not extend much beyond sixty days. A rainy season of sixty days suffices for the wants of the country. If a good deal of snow falls in winter the ground retains the damp long, and a shower or two seems to supply all the needs of vegetation till nearly midsummer. By the middle of August again the grass—the one Mongolian staple—needs no rain, is in fact damaged by rain. If much rain falls late in August, it is no uncommon thing to hear Mongols express their dissatisfaction in language that borders closely on the irreverent. During some years almost no rain falls after the middle of August. Some years ago a traveller in Mongolia met with only one fall of rain, and that but a slight one, between the middle of August of one year and the middle of June of the next year. It is only fair, however, to state that the season referred to was exceptionally dry.

Thunderstorms are seen to great advantage in Mongolia. The wide expanse of plain furnishes no

obstacle to limit the view, so that the eye can range as far almost as at sea, with this advantage, that being on *terra firma* the spectator can look at an approaching storm without fear. In the rainy season of sixty days mentioned above a great part of the rain that falls comes in thunderstorms. It is very interesting to watch the gradual, though sometimes rapid, development of a thunderstorm, and to note from what a trivial-looking cloud an immense storm may arise.

If on the alert the traveller may see the storm begin to gather, may see the dark cloud swell and boil, and thus aware of its approach make preparations and have all things ready. But more frequently the first indication noticed of a coming storm is a deafening report, as of a great gun discharged overhead or at no great distance. Then there is just time to run out, drive in the tent-pins a little, pick up odds and ends laid out to dry in the sun, when the whole firmament, catching up the battle signal, joins in the strife of the elements, and in a very short time the tempest rages from horizon to horizon. These thunderstorms are generally accompanied with fierce blasts of wind, and sometimes with hail.

In the summer of 1878 a spell of dry and excessively hot weather was closed by a very sudden and very fierce thunderstorm, in which the wind blew so strongly that the rain seemed not to fall but to

sweep past horizontally. In a few minutes the whole landscape was blotted out; nothing was to be seen but rain, nothing to be heard but the tempest. The wind, catching the corner of a tent, tore it loose and threw it back with a loud report, flinging the iron tent-pin to a great distance, where it was afterward found in the long grass. Later on in the same year a terrible thunderstorm was witnessed on the south edge of the Mongolian plateau. A south wind had been blowing for some days, and it was evident that a storm was brewing. All of a sudden the wind ceased, there was an interval of quiet, when wind from the north came on, driving the mist before it thick and dark. A few drops of rain then fell, and the atmosphere partly cleared up. Then came a quiet afternoon, and an evening so still that from the top of a hill voices in the plain could be heard quite distinctly. The clouds, however, above the hills around had a most threatening appearance, and at dark suddenly the signal gun of the thunderstorm boomed among the hills. In a few minutes the whole fury of the elements seemed to be let loose, the thunder seemed continuous, and had an awe-inspiring, metallic clang as it crashed in the skies and reverberated among the echoes of the hills; the rain fell in deluges; the wind, now from this quarter now from that, drove the rain with such force on the sides of the quivering tent that it was hardly possible to hear one speak in any voice lower than a shout

the waters rushing down from the hills swept along the lower ground in roaring torrents, and the bright glare of the lightning lit up the scene of strife at intervals of only a few seconds. The storm began about 8 P.M.; it was pretty well over by eleven. Next morning everything looked washed and clean, and the most of the day was spent by dwellers and travellers alike in drying their soaked clothes and other possessions.

A very fine thunderstorm was witnessed at another place in Mongolia in 1879. As usual, a south wind had been blowing for some days, supplying the materials for a storm. All things were ready, and all that was wanted was a beginning. Suddenly a small cloud stepped out, as it were, among the others, assumed the lead, fired the signal gun in the shape of a moderate peal of thunder, called the rest of the clouds around it, and the hurly-burly was fairly started. Our caravan was on the march. We were a little ahead, and had just time to fall back and get out our waterproofs when the storm was upon us. Wind, rain, hail, one by one and all together kept us lively for the rest of the march that was before us. In about an hour we arrived at the foot of a hill, where were habitations, and where amid the storm we set about making our camp. In a little time the storm seemed to pass around the hill, and the natives came about us congratulating themselves and us that the storm

was over. They had reckoned without their host. By-and-by the great black head of the cloud was seen looking round at us from the other side of the hill; it gradually drew nearer, and in a short time was upon us again in greatly intensified force. The first part of the storm had seemed bad enough. This was much worse. The wind was as strong as before, and the rain was much heavier. In a few minutes the sloping ground was covered with a broad sheet of flowing water, and when the hail came every hailstone as it struck the ground threw up a splash of water, as when a stone is thrown into a pond. The hailstones, too, were large, a great many of them being as great in diameter as the thickness of an ordinary man's thumb. One icy mass was picked up consisting of a number of hailstones conglomerated into the shape of a wheel about one inch and a half or two inches in diameter. Some of the larger stones made a very sensible impression on the head and shoulders, but, happily, this wheel-like piece of ice was picked up, not felt in its descent.

Hailstorms seldom do much damage in Mongolia. The cattle and the grass, for the most part, can stand them; but when hailstorms come late in the year they inflict much damage on the crops of Chinese cultivators on the borders of Mongolia, and occasionally whole fields of crops may be seen utterly destroyed in this manner.

Mongolia is a cold country. It is warm sometimes, but not often, nor for long at a time. In summer there are occasionally parching times of drought, there are even times when, after rain, the weather is mild and warm. But these are exceptions; even in midsummer a sunless day, followed or preceded by a day of rain and wind, lowers the temperature so that a skin coat is grateful, and travellers have spent entire summers sleeping every night under a great sheepskin blanket, and not finding it at all too hot. In Mongolia the traveller should never be beyond the reach of a good great-coat. Even in the warmest time of summer the wind may pipe up. Chinamen in Mongolia seem never to part with their wadded garments. The summer is long in coming, and goes away soon. There is only one month when water may not be seen frozen. That month is July, and even in July there are mornings so cold that the thermometer cannot be much if at all above freezing.

Even so late as May water frequently freezes in the basins and the pots in the tent, and in the summer of 1879 good strong ice covered a basin of water exposed outside of the tent on the night between the fourteenth and fifteenth of June. By the end of August ice may again be seen, in the morning, covering the watering troughs and pools at the wells.

If the summer is such, what of the winter? The cold is intense. Inhabitants of Kalgan say the ther-

mometer falls in Kalgan to seven or more degrees below zero of Fahrenheit. Inhabitants of Kiachta say the cold with them reaches fifty-eight degrees below zero—not below freezing, but below *zero* of Fahrenheit. Kalgan is in China, and lies much lower than Southern Mongolia, and if we estimate Mongolia as ten or fifteen degrees colder than Kalgan, the coldest for South Mongolia would be about seventeen or twenty-two below zero. Fifty-eight below zero, if not an exaggeration, is a cold seldom experienced, and probably the true statement of the greatest cold in winter in Mongolia would lie somewhere midway between the calculated twenty-two below zero for the south border, and the asserted fifty-eight below zero of the north frontier. Whatever the exact statement in degrees of the cold may be, winter lays its icy hand severely on the country, and is slow to relax its grasp. On the eleventh of June in the year 1879, a traveller was startled, on looking down a well, to see something resembling a great white ox at the bottom. It turned out to be the ice of the winter not yet melted; and a few years ago, on the twenty-eighth of June, a caravan encamped at a well from which water had to be obtained by sending a man down with a hammer and an iron tent-pin to quarry off pieces of ice, which were brought up and melted to make tea and cook food.

Considering the great cold and the abundant

summer rains of Mongolia, it might be expected that there would be heavy falls of snow in the winter. It is not so. Snow is abundant, but not deep. Three or four inches is an ordinary fall, and the action of the wind and sun usually reduces it before another fall. Ten inches of snow is said to be very rare, and to be sufficient to cause a famine. The Mongols make little or no preparation for the feeding of their cattle in winter, and when ten inches of snow covers the ground starvation stares the cattle in the face. In such cases efforts are made to clear away the snow from around such tufts of taller grass as may be seen appearing up through the surface. But it is easy to understand that but few cattle can be saved thus, and when ten inches or a foot of snow does fall it usually produces such a fatality among cattle that the season is remembered and talked of for eight or ten years to come. It not unfrequently happens that a moderately heavy fall of snow takes place over a limited region, in which case the Mongols have to lead off their cattle to some neighbouring region where the fall has been less heavy.

Mirage is a phenomenon frequently witnessed on the plains of Mongolia, confined to distorting and blurring objects seen at a distance. It makes near objects seem distant; everything affected by it seems uncertain. But this is all; such pictures of unreal landscapes as are attributed to it in more tropical

regions are unknown in Mongolia. I have never heard of anyone being lured by it to a barren place where there seemed to be water and verdure, but very frequently travellers are deceived by it far enough to expect to find tents where there were none, the distortions caused by it making it difficult to distinguish between rocks and human habitations.

More commonly, too, than mirage is seen that phenomenon on which mirage depends, the rarefaction of the atmosphere through contact with the heated earth. The cold is intense, but the power of the sun is so great that it heats the ground sufficiently to cause, even in the dead of winter, that glowing, wavy, floating appearance of the atmosphere seldom seen in Britain except on the warmer days of summer.

CHAPTER VII

MONGOLIAN CAMELS

WHEN the Peking toy-makers want to represent a Mongol, they make a red-faced man, pipe in hand, astride a camel. They are not far from the mark. A large proportion of the Mongols seen in Peking come mounted on these unwieldy animals, and though thousands on thousands of camels are employed by Chinese in and around Peking, they are used almost exclusively as beasts of burden. Chinamen, in China at least, do not use them to ride on, and the roughly dressed Mongols, jolted about the busy streets on their awkward up-country camels, make a picturesque feature of the capital during the winter months.

The finest of the Mongol camels find their way to Peking. In winter there is a fair held among the trees in front of the eastern part of the Yellow Temple, outside of the An-ting men. Anyone who likes to see a fine specimen of the species has only to ride round that way, and there they are, with their great upright humps and fine thick soft wool, tethered apart or being led about by little boys, who seem

especially small in presence of the big animals, which follow them with the greatest docility and tractableness. One of the largest camels I have ever seen was being led there by a child apparently about eight years old. The lad to look at was only a small head sticking out of a bundle of quilted clothes, and did not stand much higher than the end of the animal's tail, but he held the nose-rope, and was master of the situation. Tired of leading his charge, he made the huge camel kneel down, scrambled up between the humps, pulled his steed on to its legs, and rode off, looking like a pincushion on the back of an elephant.

Chinamen buy only the picked camels of Mongolia, feed them well, keep them in good condition, and by doing so get an amount of work out of them which would be an utter impossibility in Mongolia. The reasons for which Chinese owners buy only the best camels are obvious. A bad camel eats about as much as a good one; the keeping expenses and the working expenses are about the same; a good camel will cost say eight or ten taels more than a poor one, but will earn nearly double, and hence the expensive animal is the more profitable investment. This raises a demand for superior animals, which the Mongols hasten to meet. A camel owner wants to go to Peking and make purchases. He has no money, and a stock of old debts waiting for him

when he arrives there; so he takes some of his best animals, hands them over to the Chinese traders, clears off his old debts, contracts a lot of new ones, and sets out for home again, without perhaps ever having fingered silver. He has got his goods, the Chinaman has got the camels, and both are satisfied. The Chinese, however, do not simply wait for the Mongols to bring their camels down; they also go to Mongolia and select superior animals for the Peking market; and between the Chinese who go and buy and the Mongols who come and sell, Peking is furnished with endless strings of coal and lime carriers. Winter is the great carrying season. Spring, too, does well enough; but when the heat of summer begins to set in, camels and camel drivers hie northward for the cool breezes of the grassy plain. Camel owners in Peking make arrangements with Mongols for the summer pasture of their camels. They do not trust their animals to the Mongols; they agree upon a sum for the use of the pasture, build a little mud house, and when the season has become hot and the grass is well up, they send out the camels in charge of their own drivers, who herd them by day and sleep in the mud house by night. They manage much better than Mongols would do. Mongols turn their camels adrift in the morning, after a while mount a horse and ride after them, chase them nearer home, leave them again and after a

while hunt them up again. This drives about and disturbs the animals a good deal. The Chinamen go usually three or four in a company, and form the corners of a triangle or square, and keep with the camels the whole day. In this way the animals are kept together, and prevented from roaming about looking for good pasture; they are allowed to do nothing but eat grass, chew their cud, and fatten; and fatten they do, to the astonishment and envy of the natives, whose camels seldom thrive like those of the Chinese.

In spring all camels look ragged. As the weather gets warm the wool falls off in places, but it is not all lost till midsummer, when the camel is completely bare. In a short time the new wool begins to grow, and in October it is pleasant to see the Peking droves returning from pasture with massive humps, distended sides, and a beautiful new covering of fur.

One of the few hardships camels endure in Peking is wet weather, which makes the roads muddy. Sand suits the camel's foot best; hard, even stony roads do well enough; but on mud a camel is helpless. The foot is simply a flat surface with no catch, and after rain it is pitiful to see the trains moving along at a creeping pace, and the great clumsy feet of the camels slipping about in all directions.

The camel shows to most advantage in its native

wilds. In cultivated and inhabited districts like the plain of Peking, and North China generally, it has to compete with mules, donkeys, and other beasts of burden, and is so largely employed because it can carry cheaper than its rivals. But there are some districts and seasons in Mongolia when the ship of the desert has no rival. Gobi, for example, in a dry season, when there is little or no grass, and in winter when the snow is on the ground, and covers up the little grass that there is in that part of the country, would be almost impassable but for camels. I once contracted to be conveyed from Urga to Kalgan on horseback. All went well till Gobi was entered, when it was found that no rain had fallen. The cattle of the inhabitants there subsisted by picking up the little pieces of sunburnt grass of the previous season, which were blown about the plain and gathered in hollows and nooks among rocks, but there was nothing sufficient to support a travelling horse. There was no help for it; contrary to agreement, horses had to be exchanged for camels, which crossed the barren expanse with almost literally no feeding, and in about three days reached a green land where rain had fallen, grass had sprung up, and horse travelling was again practicable. In winter it was pretty much the same. The Mongols make no hay in summer, or only a very small quantity, utterly insufficient for the sustenance of their flocks and herds. The other animals feel it

hard, but, if not compelled to work, manage to eke out a subsistence by cropping the grass that stands up out of the snow.

Snow seldom falls heavily in Mongolia. A fall of nine or ten inches would kill off perhaps the greater part of their cattle. The usual depth is from four to six inches, and with this between them and their food the poor animals find it difficult enough to keep from starving. Then the superiority of the camel is manifest. Winter is his travelling season. Loaded with tea, away he goes, marching night after night, crunching the frozen snow under his broad feet. At camping time he is turned loose for a while, to pick up any stray stalk of grass or any scrubby bush that may appear above the snow. When resting-time comes, he and his companions are huddled close together on a little square patch of sand from which the snow has been cleared; and there he goes through the formality of chewing his cud as solemnly as if he had fed to the full. After a few hours he is loaded again, and away he goes with his slow measured step, perhaps to the plaintive tune of a Mongol song. This kind of march continues about a month, which is the usual time in winter for crossing the desert from Kalgan to Kiachta. No animal but the camel could endure it, and the hardship tells on him also. It is said that even a good-conditioned strong camel can do little more than

make one such journey in the year. It must be gently used the rest of the time; and, when the fattening season comes, it must be left completely at rest, if it is to be of any use next winter. The season for fattening camels is July, August, and September, and their fate for the next year depends on the improvement they make in these months. If they do not fatten much, they will be of little use in the winter caravans; and if they do not gather strength at all at that time, they will most likely shiver through the winter and die in the spring.

Their power of enduring thirst is great, and enables camel caravans to travel by routes closed against ox trains, which cannot go far without water. Once in two days is perhaps often enough to water a camel, and sometimes even then they do not care much to drink; and when any necessity arises for endurance, they can go three or four, or perhaps even five days, without drinking, and not exhibit much distress. It is said that the Arabs are sometimes in the habit of killing camels for the stock of water they carry in the receptable provided in them for this purpose; but, as far as I can learn, no such practice is known among the Mongols, who seem to be totally ignorant of the existence of such a receptacle in the animal. The reason may be that they are seldom or never reduced to great straits for water. There are wells or lakes along the route, and in winter snow is

used. Mongolia, though a wide and thinly peopled country, is definitely known, and has roads, in many places as well defined as any highway in England. Here and there you come upon stretches of country waterless, and therefore without inhabitants; but there are roads, larger or smaller, leading to all the important places in Mongolia, and from the inhabitants you can always learn the state of the wells and lakes on ahead. When any doubt about water exists, it is usually taken with the caravan in flat buckets slung on a camel; and even if any mistake or neglect leaves a caravan waterless, one march extra is all that is needed to rectify the omission. Mongolia is not the uninhabited, waterless, howling wilderness which some seem to suppose; its population is sparse, its water scarce, and its storms fierce; but the risks and hardships of travelling are as nothing compared to the stories that are told of desert travelling in hotter climes. I have never once heard of any caravan suffering more than very temporary inconvenience from want of water.

The speed of the camel is another point on which many people seem to have erroneous ideas. His usual pace is little over two miles an hour. If you jump on the back of an unloaded camel, and whip him, you may make him trot, or gallop even, if you can stick on. Mongols do sometimes make them run when unloaded, but it is not a common thing, and

the poor animal keeps looking back, first on one side then on the other, and all the while utters a harsh cry expressive of a sense of injustice and injury. A short run does not matter much, but Mongols avoid hurrying their camels, because it hurts them. A loaded camel in a caravan accomplishes about thirty miles a day, and to do this may be fifteen hours on the march, or even longer, as caravans are subject to numerous delays occasioned by loads shifting, beasts getting loose and breaking the train, or falling down.

The harness and furniture are of the simplest and rudest kind. A wooden pin inserted in the pierced cartilage of the nose, a slender rope of camel's hair fixed to the pin, and that is all that the camel needs by way of a bridle. When a string of them march in line, the nose-rope is passed under the binding-rope of the load on the back of the one in front, in such a way that a moderately firm pull brings it adrift. The Mongols are very careful to fix them thus, and will not allow them to be tied, lest from some cause or other one should become stationary and be unable to follow on. In such a case a gentle pull brings the nose-rope away from its fastenings, and leaves the animal free. If the rope were tied, either the cartilage would give way or the rope would break. Chinese camel-drivers are less humane. They tie the nose-rope, and when an animal in the line misses its foot and falls, either the rope or the nose must go. To do the Chinamen

justice, however, it must be admitted that there are not a few hard-nosed animals which would cause endless annoyance by drawing out their leading-ropes, and in slippery and dangerous places the drivers exercise great care, and stop the train at once when any obstruction happens; but notwithstanding all their care accidents do happen, and sometimes you may meet in Peking camels which have been in accidents of this kind, and had the whole front part of their nose carried away.

Camel's wool, or hair—whichever one pleases to call it—is an article of great importance to the Mongols. They use it mostly for making ropes and bands of various kinds, camel nose-ropes among the rest, and for spinning into thread, with which they do most of their sewing. Chinamen use it too for socks, cone-shaped, and not knitted to the form of the foot, but good warm things, worn mostly by camel-drivers and carters. A good deal of it is said to be used in the manufacture of a coarse kind of rug or carpet used by the Chinese. Of late years the value of the wool has risen greatly, as has sheep's wool also, which the Mongols seek partly to account for by the fact that there is a foreign firm at Kalgan, where it is purchased in large quantities for exportation. Notwithstanding the good price it now brings, Mongols neither comb nor shear their camels, as they do their sheep. Most of the wool is lost in the desert. The

long beautiful fleece that hangs from under the neck is cut away when spring becomes warm, but that is all; the rest is allowed to hang as long as it will, and is day by day lost in little tufts that blow away in the desert breezes, and become too much scattered to make it worth while to gather them. The reason of this apparent indifference or carelessness is that the camel is a delicate animal. He does not look it. He is big enough, and ugly enough, and looks strong enough; and in the way of marching and carrying, and enduring hunger and thirst, he can stand enough; but leave him his coat. Take away his fur, and he shivers in the cold wind, and his vitality sinks, and he is soon good for nothing. The wool is valuable, but the animal himself and his carrying power are much more valuable still. When it is remembered that a camel is worth from eighteen to twenty-five taels, and that one 'camel's back,' as the phrase is, from Kalgan to Kiachta, can earn from eight to twelve taels, it will not be difficult to understand why the Mongols prefer to lose the fur bit by bit in the desert, rather than run any risk of injuring the animal for the sake of its covering. The camel's body is worth so much more than his raiment that they are content to let the raiment go. The climate has something to do with the anxiety which they show to keep the animal's fur on. A cold day may happen at any time of the year, summer included,

and the nights even in summer can hardly be said to be warm. The camel has no shelter or stable, his only protection is his coat, and this his friendly and self-interested masters are careful to leave to him till it falls from him in tatters. Most of the wool that is procured from camels is painstakingly gathered in little handfuls, day by day, care being taken not to remove any but small patches about to fall off.

Stealing camel's wool is a common thing in spring among the poorer class of Mongols. When a caravan encamps the juvenile members of any community that happens to live near are sure to sally forth to try their luck in this line. They sometimes go a long way round and come up to the camels from beyond, or take a basket and pretend to be gathering argol fuel. Nothing but extreme carefulness on the part of the watcher can protect his animals from being despoiled.

So careful are they to defend the camels from cold, that the saddle of a camel is seldom removed in winter. If the journey is at an end, they wait a day or two before removing the saddle; while on the journey the saddle is seldom or never taken off, except once in a while to inspect the animal's back.

The saddle consists of two side-pieces of wood, six pieces of felt, and a camel's hair rope. Two felts are folded round in front of the fore hump, two are folded round behind the aft hump, one on each side is

doubled up and laid against the ridge between the humps, the two wooden side-pieces are put on outside of this again, and the whole pulled as tight as a man can bring it by planting his foot on the end of the wooden side-piece and pulling the rope with both hands. It takes two men to saddle a camel in this fashion. Chinamen manage better.

The motion of the camel is peculiar, and I am often asked what it is like. Does it make me sea-sick? Does it make me giddy? Is it not tiring? Does it not produce any internal derangement? For other people I can't answer. As regards myself I have never been sea-sick on a camel, I have never been giddy, I have never been internally deranged, but I have often been tired. The first time I tried camel riding was one night after dark, when I found myself astride of the rough pack-saddle of a camel, holding on to the wooden frame. I had no stirrups, a Mongol mounted on another camel held the nose-rope, and led the way at a trot over steep little sand hills, crossing which was like riding great waves in a small boat, only rougher. Going up hill I felt like being shot off behind, going down hill I felt like being precipitated over the animal's head, and all the while seemed to be bobbed up and down and pulled backwards and forwards. That ride was a short one. Next day I had my baggage put on the two sides of a camel, and mounted on the top myself. For the first hour the

motion did seem queer. It was a pulling forwards and backwards at every step of the animal. In a short time the strangeness of the movement went off, and since that I have ridden rough and smooth camels under many various circumstances, and never felt any inconvenience beyond fatigue. I have heard of foreigners, however, who said they suffered injury from the motion of the camel, and it is not at all improbable that they did. The motion is awkward and rough, and no one who is afraid of jolting and shaking should ever undertake a long journey on camel back. The Mongols never ride camels when they can help it. They much prefer a horse, and the reason so many of them come to Peking on camels is, that the camel stands the journey better and carries more than the horse. There are great differences of camels too, young males being the roughest, and sedate cows being the pleasantest and smoothest. The camel does not trip or shy so readily as the horse; except on mud or ice, you may trust him to keep on his feet; but when he does shy the consequences may be much more serious, as the height of the rider's fall is so much greater. On the whole a steady-going female camel is a pretty safe and comfortable steed, and may be ridden without much risk. The stories commonly told of the evil effects of camel-riding are, I am convinced, much exaggerated.

The peculiarities of the camel are many.

It is awkward to a degree. Let three or four get together, and they will mix themselves and their nose-ropes up in one inextricable mess. Then their loads will entangle, and they will draw and push about, pulling each other's nose-ropes, and seemingly intent only on keeping their own nose-ropes slack. Once entangled they can do absolutely nothing to free themselves. When moored together at night, the nose-rope of one will get over the head of a neighbour. A simple movement would free it, but the distressed brute has not brain enough to think of it, and will lie with its neck twisted half the night. Even the Mongols, awkward themselves, are struck with the awkwardness and stupidity of the camel, and never seem to think of reproving it when its stupidity gets it into trouble. A horse knows, even an ox is responsible; but a camel is not supposed to know anything, not even good pasture when it comes to it.

A camel is easily frightened. A company of Kalka Mongols on one occasion were riding along on fine camels, and had just got outside one of the gates of Peking, when a little Chinese boy came behind and made a stamping, as if some one were running up behind them. This simple action on the part of a mere child created a stampede, and in a few seconds eight or ten camels were driving and pushing each other furiously, in spite of the exertions of their riders, who seemed to be borne helplessly along. I have also

noticed, when riding abreast of my Mongolian guide on a great highway at night, that my camel, which was on the left, kept his head stretched out into the darkness on the left side, and my guide's camel stretched his head out into the right, as if searching for objects of terror; and this they did nearly continuously during the whole of the two or three nights that we rode them. Wolves are their greatest terror, and in presence of them they get so alarmed, and can at the best do so little to defend themselves, that they readily fall a prey to these smaller but braver animals.

They are not vicious. Very few of them bite. The bulls, about January and February, are dangerous to go near, and will think nothing of chawing up any one who gives them the chance. They are usually carefully secured at that season by a hobble on the fore feet, which reduces their pace to a minimum. With a proper head-fastening they are safe enough in a caravan. Mongols say that if any man should happen to be pursued by an open-mouthed bull, when overtaken the best thing he can do is to clasp the brute's neck with his arms and legs, and hang thus till relieved. In one of the Peking hospital reports, a case is mentioned of a Chinaman who died from the effects of a camel's bite. The bulls at other seasons, and the other camels always, seem to be nearly free from this vice.

Nor do they kick, except very rarely. Kicking is not unknown, but it is very rare. I do not think I have ever seen or heard of any one being kicked or kicked at except myself, and two at least of the three instances when a camel struck out at me admit of explanation. Once I fell from the back of one camel close to the heels of the one in front. The animal in front was scared, and started off along the road, kicking out most vigorously. He was too much alarmed to kick till he got a yard or two away, and then it was ludicrous to see him kicking vigorously when there was nothing to strike. On another occasion, when I suddenly ran past a camel close to its heels, she—for it was a female—struck out and caught me below the knee. The great broad flabby foot was more kindly than a hoof would have been. In both these instances the animals were not vicious, but merely alarmed. On another occasion I had a narrow escape from a malicious kick. I was driving a camel towards a tent, touching him up gently from behind with a whip, when suddenly he struck out a full and vigorous blow. Happily he had miscalculated his distance; the foot just reached my clothes, and rattled the keys in my pocket, but left my person untouched. A few inches closer in might have been serious. These three cases are the only exceptions I have seen or heard of to the general rule that camel are free from the vice of kicking.

Camels are docile as beasts of burden. They do not often become unmanageable and run away, like horses and oxen. Even when frightened they soon become quiet, and when their burdens overbalance, they stand quietly till relieved from a confusion of ropes and baggage that would drive a horse frantic. There are exceptions to every rule, and I once saw an exceptional case of this kind. In a camel caravan travelling from Kiachta to Urga there were about eight or ten Chinamen, who had a kind of coarse biscuit packed in baskets as provisions for the way. On the march they were much annoyed by the crows, which soon discovered the biscuits, and would perch on the load when in motion, insert their great beaks through the openings in the wickerwork, and wrench away till they got out a piece of biscuit, with which they would fly off. The travellers themselves, mounted on the loads of camels in the train, were helpless. They could not stop the caravan and dismount every time a crow came; shouting was no good, the crow did not fear that much, and would only look up for a second, then excavate away as intently as ever. It was tantalising in the extreme, and one of the travellers at the beginning of the march provided himself with some small stones. A crow was not long in coming, a stone was thrown at him, but in place of striking the culprit went a little too high and struck the leg of a young camel in

front. The beast, startled, gave a plunge or two; the load shifting startled him more, and breaking adrift, he started galloping and plunging over the plain, with bags, felts, ropes, and the two wooden side-pieces of the saddle trailing and tripping him up, and being scattered all along the track. He came to a standstill and was captured about half a mile off, brought back, reloaded, and from that time conducted himself as an orderly member of the caravan.

In one part of Mongolia I met a man riding about the country, looking for a camel which had freed itself in a somewhat similar way, and escaped under cover of night. He had been searching for it for a week or two, and had obtained no traces of it. But such cases of runaway camels are conspicuous by their rareness. Very few camels ever run away from a caravan. On the contrary, it is no uncommon thing for an untied camel out at pasture to join itself on and follow a passing caravan. A great fat animal once insisted on following our caravan, and would be turned away neither by threats nor blows. Unwilling to cause the careless owner trouble, and afraid of being suspected of decoying the obstinate camel away, we had to stop, capture it, and send back a man with it to the nearest tent, where it would remain tied up till the owner claimed it.

The camel is a good beast of burden, but a poor

draught animal. Camels do take carts along the great highway of the desert, and on smooth, hard, level roads do well enough; but sand or soft ground distresses them, and to go up steep hills or over passes it is necessary to hire oxen or horses. Indeed, some camels bred in the plain country refuse to go over passes on any condition. As they approach the hill they have to be unloaded, blindfolded, and driven up the steep. One animal of this kind, after being coaxed, and beaten and pulled, and pushed two-thirds of the way up the pass, lay down and would not be persuaded to rise. At their wits' end, the Mongols rolled it over into some water, thinking this would be sufficient to make him get up. But no, he would rather lie in the water than go forward. How they got him to go on at last I don't know; but after I waited a while at the top up he came, surrounded by the panting Mongols, who were employing their returning breath in addressing disrespectful language to him. It was noticeable that he exhibited no reluctance to descend the other side of the hill.

Spitting is a disagreeable peculiarity of the camel If you go close past him in front, as he is chewing his cud, you will hear a grunt and receive a green shower of half-masticated vegetable matter. Mongols who have to do with the management of camels usually have their garments stained in this manner, and seem to take it coolly and as a matter of course,

but unwary foreigners and well-dressed Chinamen are apt to resent it, and get a double dose in so doing. It seems to be the camel's only defence, and disagreeable as it is, is a much less objectionable vice than biting. Peking camels, which are daily among crowds of people, seem to lose the habit, probably because, if they kept it up, they would be so constantly opening fire that they would have nothing left to swallow.

Fondness for ashes is another characteristic of the camel. The soft dusty ashes of wood and argol are his especial delight, and he will often leave his pasture and travel a good distance to enjoy the luxury of sprawling about on them, and perhaps camels never look more uncouth than when two or three of them are broadside down on an ash-heap, swinging their long legs and broad feet about, and uttering cries of uneasiness and displeasure as they come into collision with or press upon each other.

The mourning of the camel is peculiar and impressive; its impressiveness to me arising, partly, perhaps, from the circumstances in which I once heard it, before I had become very familiar with it. We had rested in a solitary tent, pitched among large boulders away up on the edge of a wide shallow valley, which had a peculiarly barren and desolate aspect just at that time. At dusk we mounted our camels and rode slowly and silently down among the

stones, towards the lonely well at the bottom of the valley. There was neither man, nor beast, nor bird, nor insect even, to be seen or heard. The shades were thickening and the loneliness and silence were oppressive, when, darkly, from among the rocks to the right, with slow and mournful pace, advanced a solitary camel. It seemed dispirited and weak, took no heed of us, but slowly crossed the open space near the well, and disappeared again among the rocks and darkness on the left. Ever and anon it uttered its slow and plaintive wail, which came borne over the darkening stillness as our camels trod silently up the other slope of the valley. The scene and the sound haunt me still. It was like the wailing of an outcast spirit wandering among stony places, seeking rest, and finding none. The sound itself resembles that which can be made by the closed human mouth, beginning down at the lowest possible note, and going up slowly and gradually to the highest. Cow camels make this sound when separated from their calves. It is very touching to hear it; and after listening to it I can almost believe the Mongols when they say that a skilful fiddler playing a plaintive air, can draw tears from a camel's eyes. I have never heard male camels mourn thus, and the Mongols assert musical susceptibility only of female camels who are suckling their young.

No account of Mongolian camels would be com-

plete without some mention of camel-stealing, which is carried on quite extensively in Mongolia. Hitherto our caravan has always escaped this visitation, which has doubtless been owing as much to the leanness of the camels as to the strictness of the watch kept. It is usual to have one man sit up and watch at night, but when the poor fellow has been travelling or working all day, it is hard to keep awake at night. I never scolded them much for going to sleep on watch, because I usually went to sleep myself when I took my turn on duty. However, watching is not the formidable thing which might be supposed. The danger is at the early part of the night. Nobody hardly would steal a camel after two or three o'clock in the morning, as they would not be able to get far enough away before daylight. Mongol visitors leaving after dark usually insist on their host seeing them away a little distance, lest a theft should take place in the night, and suspicion might rest on them. The Mongols like to steal camels, because they can travel off silently, and because they are in themselves valuable animals. If they can only march them undetected to the borders of China, they can find a market and evade pursuit. One part of Mongolia is said to have no camel thieves—the very sandy part—because any thief could be followed up by the trail; but in any other part no camel is safe, and if once got away you may search for it in vain.

In the summer of 1873, one of the many living Buddhas of Mongolia had among other treasures a number of good camels, fattening on the herbs and bushes which made the neighbourhood of his temple good pasture ground for these animals. He lived a long way from the Chinese border; the country side was quiet, and the keeper of the herd suspected nothing. In such circumstances no strict look-out is kept; they are driven together and counted once a day, or once every second day, as the case may be. One day the count was eight short, and on examination it was found that those missing were the finest of the lot. The alarm was raised, inquiry was made, and it was discovered that two men had been seen travelling with exactly eight good camels. To understand fully the daring of the theft, it must be remembered that camels out at summer pasture are not in a condition to travel without first being tied up and hardened. Properly speaking, this process requires a number of days, say five or ten. Sometimes it is continued much longer. The camel is tied up all night and all day, with the exception of an hour or, perhaps, two; in some cases it is allowed little food for days together. After this it is supposed to be fit for travel; without this preparation a march would damage it a great deal. The thieves spoken of above had to take the camels from the pasture 'untied;' to rush them away in this state would be to damage them greatly; so

they travelled but a short distance the first day and the second, starving the camels as they went; then, when they were lighter, put on speed and travelled continuously night and day almost without intermission. As soon as the alarm was raised and the trail found, horsemen galloped after them in hot haste, but as the theft had not been discovered for a little time, some delay occurred in finding the trail, and the thieves meantime having hardened their animals, hurried on, and escaped pursuit. It was a daring and difficult thing to do. Camping after short marches on the first two days required nerve and cool determination, which would have ensured success in many a difficulty arising in honourable enterprise.

So much for the Mongolian camel. The Mongols often ask what animals we have in our native country, and are greatly amused to hear that camels are not common, and that the few that are imported are objects of curiosity. When told that we have to pay for the privilege of looking at them, they laugh outright, and remark that we may look at theirs free of charge. To them the camel, though valuable and prized, is a common and uninteresting animal, and they would doubtless be not a little surprised at any one taking the trouble of writing or reading a description of anything so familiar. But every country

is not Mongolia, and everybody is not a Mongol; and perhaps some of the facts and peculiarities mentioned above may not be without interest to some who do not see a camel every day of their lives.

CHAPTER VIII

DELUSIONS ABOUT MONGOLIA

THE object of the present chapter is to correct some mistakes which, from questions that are sometimes asked, and remarks that are sometimes made, it would seem are prevalent regarding Mongolia.

The Mongols are frequently spoken of as 'wandering tribes,' and people think it strange that any one Mongol, wandering about in so broad a country as Mongolia, can ever be found again. Now the truth is that anyone who is conversant with Mongolia can go straight to the tent of almost any man he wishes to find, and that there is no more difficulty in seeking out a man's place of abode in Mongolia than in the case of a man in England. Most Mongols have a fixed and definite place of abode from which they never move their tent except twice a year, that is, once in spring and again in autumn, when they shift from their winter encampment to their summer encampment, and *vice versâ*. In truth, in some cases some Mongols, who are too well pleased with a location to be willing to move from it, but too timid

to disregard entirely the custom of having different quarters for winter and summer, go through the farce of shifting these tents a few feet only, and then congratulate themselves that they have 'flitted,' like orthodox Mongols. It sometimes happens that a heavy fall of snow, local in extent, or a drought, compels them, for their cattle's sake, to shift their quarters for a time, till the difficulty passes over. But in place of this shifting being habitual, they never resort to it except when compelled, and think it very hard lines to have to leave their fixed place. Tribes and men have their fixed localities almost as distinct and definite as in China, England, or any settled country, and it is quite a mistake to suppose that Mongol tribes and men wander about anywhere and everywhere.

The Halhas in the north are said to shift their quarters in summer once a fortnight, for their cattle's sake, but the southern tribes do not do so; and even the northern people are methodical and regular in their shiftings, having a kind of circuit which they go, and a definite centre to which they return. It is not impossible that some of the remote tribes may be migratory, but it is safe to say of the great divisions of the Halhas in the north, the Soonites in the middle, and the Chahars in the south of Mongolia, and of many others too, that they are not roaming or migratory tribes, but fixed and definite in their places of abode.

Mongolia is sometimes conceived to be a waterless country. This is quite a mistake. Wells are moderately abundant, and in most cases the water is found near the surface. In the country of sandhills, water is sometimes procured by merely digging out a few spadefuls of sand; while there are districts of the country that abound with lakes and streams. Wherever there are inhabitants of course there are wells, and the uninhabited parts—though there are such—are comparatively few. All along the travelled routes there are wells and water in abundance, for the most part at intervals of only a few miles, and the Mongol camel does not possess the water-bag of the native of the dry hot plains of Arabia; either that or the Mongols have never discovered this peculiarity. A traveller entering Mongolia must be provided with buckets to carry water; but his is rather an exceptional case if on his journey he suffers much from the want of water.

Trackless is a term sometimes applied to Mongolia. Now it is true that there may be—doubtless are—trackless wastes somewhere in Mongolia, but Mongolia as a country is not trackless. On the contrary, there are great broad roads running through it in many directions; roads made not by the hands of man, but, it may be, by camels' feet, yet, however made, as well marked and a great deal broader often than the king's highway in England. These roads are so well

marked that on one occasion a foreigner and a native, neither of whom had ever travelled that way before, followed one of them for nearly two weeks, and never lost it, even in the night time, except at the very end, when they did not lose the track, but followed up a wrong branch of it.

Roads abound in Mongolia. There are usually two to everywhere, sometimes more than two. Camels usually go by one route, ox-carts by another; oxen, as they travel slower, and need more pasture and water than camels, taking a road where water is more abundant and grass more plentiful. In addition to the great roads along which pass the hundreds and thousands of camels and ox-carts which convey tea, salt, timber, and grain, from one trading centre to another, there are numerous lesser roads, not so much frequented, but nevertheless distinctly marked and easily followed. Mongols are great hands for leaving the road and taking short cuts, which frequently turn out longer in the long run, and thus they frequently travel a long way without following a road or track of any kind; but that is a matter of choice, and by being content to take a route a mile or two longer they might, in most cases, have a road all the way. In only one case can Mongolia be called a trackless waste; that is the case of the sandy parts of the country, when the wind blows and obliterates the tracks. There are such places, but they are com-

paratively small, and one may travel a great deal in Mongolia and not see above one or two such districts.

Mongolia is for the most part a great plain, but it is not all plain. There are immense regions of hill country in it, some of them of much grandeur and great beauty. In the Desert of Gobi the country is level enough, but both north and south of that there are hills in abundance.

It is sometimes supposed that one of the difficulties of the Mongolian traveller is to provide himself with fire. There is usually little difficulty in the case. Native Mongols collect fuel in great heaps for their own use, and of this they are usually very willing to sell. Like everybody else, they are ready to take advantage of a traveller's necessity, and overcharge him a good deal; but argol, the dried dung of animals, is so cheap originally, costing only the labour of gathering it, that even when over-charged it is cheap.

There is also a delusion about this fuel, namely, that it smells unpleasantly when burning. This is quite a mistake. Argol is clean to handle, easy to light, pleasant to use as fuel, and very good to cook with. In burning there is no smell of any kind, except such as attends the combustion of other materials. The only trouble about it is that it gets damp easily, and then it will not burn at all, that it

gives out a great quantity of smoke when it is being lit up, and that it soon burns away, so that the fire needs constant feeding.

People often suppose that the Mongols are great eaters of mutton—that mutton is one of the principal articles of diet in Mongolia. The truth is that the Mongols are very fond of flesh of all kinds; not only do they eat mutton, but beef, horse-flesh, and camel's flesh; all and any of these never come amiss. When the Mongols have flesh to eat, they also display a wonderful capacity for eating large quantities. Though this is all true, mutton or flesh of any kind is not so common an article of diet as is supposed. The simple truth is, they cannot afford it. It costs too much. The ordinary diet of ordinary Mongols is preparations of milk and farinaceous food. Millet of two kinds, buck-wheat flour, oat-meal, and milk—these are the staples. Wheat flour is common in the tents of the rich, and white rice is seen occasionally at the great temple festivals. Mutton is perhaps always on hand in the tents of the rich in winter, when it keeps frozen; but except on festive occasions, and when prescribed by a medical man, is eaten sparingly, while the less well-to-do Mongols often go long without tasting it. In summer even the rich go without mutton—how much more, then, the poor. Even in places remote from cultivation a sheep can be bartered for a large

quantity of grain, and however much a Mongol may prefer flesh, he is either too poor or too parsimonious to indulge his carnivorous propensities.

It is sometimes supposed that people in Mongolia are in danger from wild beasts. It is not so. Wolves are the only dangerous animals, and they are dangerous to cattle only, not to men. Either the Mongol wolf is a different and less formidable species than the Russian and Chinese wolf, or for some other reason it deports itself differently. It may be that the Mongols constantly showing a bold front, and attacking it whenever they can come up with it, keep it in subjection; or the ease with which at all times, summer and winter, day and night, it can supply its wants, keeps it from banding together in packs and developing ferocious tendencies. At any rate, no one thinks of being afraid of a skulking Mongol wolf. Even boys do not hesitate to rush at a wolf when seen. There are stories afloat of wolves forming packs and even attacking men in some remote regions; but these stories are regarded as strange by the Mongols themselves, and if such things happen at all they are very rare. Mongols feel no uneasiness about the wolf. Men not only travel solitary and unarmed, but even in uninhabited districts do not hesitate to hobble their horse and lie down to sleep on the plain at night; and if they think of the wolf at all in such circumstances, it is

only to hope that he will not come and disturb their horse. As regards wild beasts, Mongolia is quite safe.

Mongol dogs are in great request among foreigners and even Chinese in Peking and North China, and some fine specimens of dogs do come from Mongolia. From this it is sometimes supposed that Mongol dogs generally are a superior breed. This is quite a mistake. Ninety-nine dogs out of a hundred—not so many as that quite, but a very large proportion of the Mongol dogs—are simple curs that are good for nothing but yelping and barking, and perhaps biting on the sly. A few of the dogs are larger, stronger, bolder, and more dangerous, but a traveller may be several seasons in Mongolia, and not see above a score of dogs that strike him as being worthy of admiration. Two fine dogs, seen by a foreigner a year or two ago in Mongolia, were reported to be derived from Tibet, and in all his wanderings on the plateau the present writer has seen only one native dog that commanded respect. Foreigners sometimes get down dogs from Mongolia to China, but they seldom thrive. The climate of China seems to be too hot.

Mongol cats are frequently spoken of, and Mongol chickens are sold by hundreds in the Peking market in winter. Neither the cats nor the chickens belong to pastoral Mongolia. Out on the grass land cats

and chickens are seldom seen, and are no more native to the place than parrots are native to England. In a Mongol's tent a cat lives a poor tied-up existence, the house-wife being afraid for her milk-pots, and about Mongol tents chickens can find no spilt grain to pick up, and, blown about in the wind without the shelter of walls, and starved, lead a life almost as miserable and out of place as that of the cat. The Mongol chickens come from the districts of Mongolia on the Chinese frontier, where the Mongols have given themselves to cultivation; the cats, if they come from Mongolia at all, probably come from the same place, but cats and chickens alike are unknown among the Mongols who live in tents and herd their cattle on the free pastures.

It is a great mistake to suppose that a description of one part of Mongolia is applicable to any other part of the country. A country so wide in extent differs greatly in the characteristics of the different parts. Gobi is flat, but there are great districts of hilly region; in Gobi the grass is mostly sparse, but there are regions where the grass grows as deep and thick almost as in an English hayfield, having in addition a profusion of flowers; vast regions of Mongolia have a good hard firm soil, but there are sandy districts, in which the wind leaves the sand in ridges like waves of the ocean, which ridges, too, keep slowly shifting their position. A man may travel a month

in Mongolia and hardly see above three or four trees, but there are regions where groves abound, and districts and hills covered by dense and broad forests; there are parched regions in Mongolia, but there are also verdant regions glad with numerous streams; there are brackish lakes whose waters are fit drink for neither man nor beast, and lakes from which are taken annually hundreds and thousands of tons of salt; but there are also fresh-water lakes, rich in fish and gay with flocks of water fowl; there are regions where flocks and herds are turned adrift on the pastures open and free on all sides for hundreds of miles, but there are also regions well peopled and cultivated like China, and to be distinguished from that country only by seeing the red-coated lama following the plough, or hearing the irate carter shouting to his animals in the gasping and blustering language of Mongolia. Mongolia is like China. It is an immense country, and different regions of it differ widely in natural features, so care should be taken not to suppose that the description of any one part is applicable to any other. In one thing it is, in a missionary point of view, superior to China. Over its immense area its sparse population speak a language differing so little in its dialects, that men meeting from very distant regions can communicate with less difficulty than a Scotchman has in understanding an Englishman.

CHAPTER IX

MONGOLIAN RUINS

RUINS in Mongolia would be a more correct expression, for the Mongols have hardly anything that could go to ruin. A tribe of Mongols who inhabited any district, on abandoning their locality would leave few traces of their occupancy. Immediately after their going there would be scraps of felt, rags of skin clothes and cotton clothes, odds and ends of tent wood, mouldered fuel, circles of cattle pens, at first barren then luxuriant, a heap or two of ashes, and a well.

Twenty years later there might be a remnant of ashes and a slight depression where the well had been, add a few years to that again, and it is questionable if even the filled-up well would be discernible. The only impression that a Mongol ever makes on a landscape, the only impression that has anything lasting about it, is the horse enclosure, a circular earthen wall which is sometimes thrown up to confine horses at night.

Whence, then, come the ruins in Mongolia? The Mongols themselves have little or no explanation to

offer concerning them. There seems to be a sort of general tradition that once upon a time the Chinese occupied a large tract of Mongolia, extending, according to some versions of the tradition, as far north as Urga, and that they were at last driven out of Mongolia by a victorious Mongol leader who swept the land clear of the detested and despised Chinaman. At the present day the same despised Chinaman is slowly working his way up north, gradually displacing the sparse tents and the flocks and herds of the Mongols by fields of grain waving around numerous and comfortable-looking homesteads. The Mongol, as he shifts back his tent farther into the desert, heaves a sigh for his departed glory, and nourishes in his heart a prophecy said to exist, that in the future there shall arise another great Mongol leader, who will again sweep the land clear of the intruder with the battle-cry of Mongolia for the Mongol.

The ruins are principally of two kinds—cities and mills. The cities are very numerous. Almost anywhere within eighty or a hundred miles of the present Chinese frontier these cities may be met with. All that is now left of them are the mud walls, crumbled and smoothed off into mounds, grass grown, and seemingly nearly as durable as the natural features of the country themselves. Some few of these walls, having more perpendicular parts left, betoken an

antiquity of no great extent, but most of them are crumbled down to an angle of durability that seemingly would be little affected by two or three hundreds of years. If it is true that earth mounds are the most durable monuments that human industry can raise, some of these cities may be of a very ancient date indeed.

Occasionally in these cities may be found a few bricks, a few pieces of tile, or a block or two of marble; and near the entrance of one city, within recent years there might have been seen a perpendicular stone, which probably stood as it had been placed by the same hands that raised the walls that are now represented by crumbled mounds. It is probable that Chinese literature gives an account of the population who built and inhabited those cities, but in the localities where those cities stood, and among the present inhabitants of the place who tend their flocks there, and ride up of an evening on to these mounds to see if their cattle are coming home, no tradition even of the people seems to be left. 'Their memory and their name is gone.'

The ruins of the cities are not at all strange. They are just what might be expected, perhaps what would be found some hundreds of years hence in a Chinese district if the inhabitants were driven out and their country made into a sheep walk tomorrow. But the mills are curious. They are in

various degrees of preservation. Of some there are only traces left. Some are better preserved, nearly half being left. Some, again, are perfect and entire. They consist of two parts—a circular groove and a great round stone with a hole in the centre. It is quite evident that the stone ran on its edge in the groove. The stone is about six feet in diameter and a foot more or less thick; while the groove describes a circle of about twenty-six feet in diameter. The groove is very shallow, being only about seven or eight inches deep. These mills are numerous in Mongolia. The groove stones are put to a variety of uses by the present Mongol. Are stepping stones wanted for crossing a stream? these old groove stones are hunted up and brought into use; is a big stone wanted for almost any purpose? an old groove stone is most likely to be the first one that offers; does it happen to be necessary to make a run for the water from the well to the watering trough? old groove stones are placed with the curve reversed in alternate stones, the joints made water-tight with a packing of old felt, and there is a conduit, winding a little, it is true, but more durable than the wooden trough itself; and in not a few cases poorer Mongols do without a trough at all, and water their few cattle from a run of these same groove stones, placed end to end and joined, as described above, with felt.

It is only in the less inhabited districts, where no one has wanted to use the stones, that these rude mills can be seen entire. The question arises, what were they meant to grind? It could hardly be grain. For grinding grain the stone wheel seems superfluously heavy, and the immense diameter of the groove inconveniently large. What else could it be that these bygone people wanted so badly to grind that they had to set up their cumbersome mills everywhere, and whatever it was that they wanted to grind, whatever persuaded them to give that mill so great a circumference as about eighty feet? Would not a smaller circumference have done equally well? Are there any such mills used for anything at the present day? Or were these rude mills used by a semi-barbarous or half-instructed people who did not know how to make more convenient mills?

These old cities, these old mills, call up sad thoughts in the breast of the traveller in his lonely journey over the plain. They point to the fact that the land that is now desolate, destitute in many parts of cattle even, once was well peopled. Some ruthless force must have violently set back the hands of progress. It is impossible not to sympathise with the Mongols, who rejoice in their land reclaimed from the possession of the invader, and as the traveller sees his silent string of camels winding along a road, in which with shuffling feet they tread on the now

worn level foundations of the walls of houses, it is impossible not to think how much more attractive the landscape would look if thickly inhabited, even by a people who knew no better than set up mills twenty odd feet in diameter and who teach their children to salute the traveller as 'Foreign Devil.'

CHAPTER X

TOBACCO IN MONGOLIA

A PAPER of mine appeared in the *Chinese Recorder* in 1888, on Tobacco, Whisky and Opium. Since then I have heard a good deal from friends privately on the subject. For whisky and opium few have anything to say, but most are far from being convinced of the evil of tobacco, and think it is too unimportant a subject for discussion even. Some few have gone on to say they think tobacco in some cases beneficial. Beneficial or no, they maintain that men must have, and will have, some pleasurable indulgence, and that it is no use fighting against tobacco. One friend writes me very earnestly against letting the use of drink or smoke have anything to do with a man's relation to the kingdom of God, and some have asked me on what authority I shut a man out from heaven because he smokes tobacco? It is evident that a few more words are needed on the tobacco question.

1. Its enormous use in Eastern Mongolia.—Foreigners generally have little conception of the

extent to which tobacco is used. Adult males, with very few exceptions, all smoke. Adult females, as a rule, smoke, but the proportion of non-smoking women is somewhat larger than that of non-smoking men. How would the smoking foreigner like to see his mother, his wife, his sisters and his daughters all keeping him company, sucking away at pipes, and expectorating as freely as he does? Would not this help to cure him of smoking? In this case he might not consider the tobacco question quite so unimportant as he now does, when its use is confined to his own lordly privileged self. Yet the Chinese position is quite consistent and logical, viz.: if it is good for the man, it is good for the woman; if it is wrong in the woman, it is wrong in the man. Let there be fair play on both sides of the house. But the point in question is not so much this, as the quantity used, and the female use of tobacco increases the aggregate consumption of it very largely.

I am willing to believe that the district of Ch'eng Te Fu, Eastern Mongolia, indulges more in tobacco than do other districts; but anywhere in China let a man go about with his eyes open and he cannot fail to see the large trade done in pipe-mouths, pipe-heads, and pipe-shanks. In Ch'ao Yang alone, at the annual fair, the number of glass, stone and brass pipe-mouths sold is enormous; pipe-shanks come in mule-loads, and all the year round there are tradesmen

who make their living by making and mending pipe-heads, or, as they here call them, 'pipe pots.' The pipe, however, is a comparatively small affair. The main expense in smoking is the tobacco itself. Its cultivation takes up much good land, and thus by limiting the produce of grain increases the price of food. Its manufacture, namely drying, is quite an important branch of industry in autumn. Ropes are made from a special kind of grass for hanging it, spaces of ground are cleared in the fields, and stretching frames set up, to which the ropes are attached.

Important as is the local tobacco interest, that which is locally produced is only a very small part of the whole. Great quantities are imported from the eastward, and all—whether local or imported—has to be paid for.

2. Tobacco is expensive.—Compared with food, clothing, and the rate of wages, tobacco in China is anything but cheap. There is no special tax on tobacco, but even without a tax tobacco is dear. The Chinese pipe-bowl, or 'pot,' is small, and the quantity used at any one time is not large, but a man or woman's tobacco bill soon runs up. From observation, too, I am inclined to believe that one-third or more even, perhaps nearly one-half, of the tobacco used, is paid for by people so poor that they can ill afford it; very many of them having, in consequence,

to go short of food and clothing. Foreigners unacquainted with the extent to which poverty is prevalent among the mass of Chinese people, are apt to lose sight of this aspect of the case, but it is a very painful aspect of the case, and a very crying evil. As a rule, foreigners who cannot afford it don't smoke, but Chinamen and Chinawomen smoke whether they can afford it or not. Surrounded by a crowd of men, hungry and half-clad, eagerly asking how they are to be fed and clothed, it is only right and honest of the missionary to tell them to begin mending matters by putting away the tobacco-pipe and pouch, with which nine-tenths of them are supplied. As a rule, too, the hearers themselves acknowledge the justness of the remark, and run on unsolicited to sum up the cost of the indulgence for a year.

3. Tobacco is useless.—It is quite wonderful how unanimous the Chinese are in admitting this. In asking many hundreds of men annually what use they found tobacco to be, I can remember only three or so who made any attempt at a defence of it. Every one joins in saying it is no use at all; only having acquired the habit it is difficult to get rid of. Not only so, but in most cases the crowd, if there is one round, laughs at the idea of it being *possible* that tobacco has really a use. On this score there is no trouble in dealing with the Chinese out here in Eastern Mongolia. In indulging in it they do not try to

persuade themselves they get any good from it. They have simply followed the multitude in a practice which is pleasant, but useless. They have gone into the habit gradually, and in an entire absence of thought about its being useful or not.

4. Tobacco is harmful.—The Chinese, most of them, in smoking, expectorate freely. Apart altogether from the repulsive dirtiness of this spitting abomination, comes the serious question, Does not the parting with saliva to such an extent as is common among smokers have an injurious effect on the health? Point this out to a Chinaman, and he at once admits, more earnestly than a foreigner even, that saliva is a precious element in the bodily economy, and that in spitting it out he is throwing away one of the constituents of life. This is true in all cases of smoking; how injurious it must be to the juvenile smokers who abound in China!

It must be remembered, too, that in Chinese smoking we have to deal not merely with moderate smoking, but with smoking to excess. There are moderate smokers in China, but a very great proportion of smokers here put no restraint upon themselves, and are resorting to it continually.

From early morning till late at night the pipe is always near at hand, and in wonderfully frequent use. Apologists for tobacco talk about a pipe after meals, &c., but your regular Chinese smoker does not

confine himself to that. Meals or no meals, he must have his pipe. He has it the last thing on going to bed at night, and you may see him in the early morning, his clothes just thrown around him, opening his door in the grey dawn, his pipe already in his mouth.

5. Smoking tends to indolence and laziness.—When a man sits down to rest a little and does nothing, he knows he is doing nothing, and soon sets to work again. When he sits down with his pipe, he does not feel the inaction, and is apt to sit much too long. Especially is this the case when there are two or three in company. It is safe to say that even lazy men would find it hard to quietly remain doing absolutely nothing for the periods of time during which they can sit and smoke, and not feel the inaction irksome.

6. Smoking is, to a Chinaman, demoralising.—He knows that in smoking he is not following his higher instincts. In smoking he is degrading himself in his own eyes. He respects the man who does not smoke, and would respect himself more highly if he did not smoke. He knows to do right but does it not, and thus offends his conscience. This is a statement which foreigners, especially the smoking foreigner, may be inclined to disbelieve. The foreigner should remember, though, that the Chinaman has been born and lived in a place where he sees tobacco grown,

that all his life he has been surrounded by multitudes struggling for bread, and going hungry because they could not get enough to eat, and that the Chinaman knows and feels that the tobacco trade and use adds in many ways to the difficulty of procuring the necessaries of life.

7. To give up smoking acts as a first stepping-stone to reformation in more important points.—Some friends are indignant at the idea of what they call shutting the gate of heaven against a man because he smokes. Other friends fear that a reformed Chinaman will trust to his self-denial rather than to Christ for salvation. The indignation of the one class, and the fear of the other, is uncalled for. In any old-established church or mission it would be unwise to make this a condition of membership. A voluntary society in the church would be the right thing there; but in starting a new cause, in a new field, to insist on non-smoking does not seem a hardship. It seems a help rather to the man himself, and I have met a number of heathen—men who, though friendly, won't become Christians—who tell me that they have given up tobacco. I don't think asking them to abandon tobacco keeps one man from Christ. Last year a young man complained of the hardship of non-smoking. He was a candidate. Hearing him say so, it seemed as if this might be a stumbling-stone after all to some. The man did not eventually join

Christianity, but went off and joined a sect. It could not be the demand to give up tobacco which sent him away, because non-smoking is a *sine quâ non* of membership in the sect which he has entered.

To those who say that a reformed man may trust to his reformation rather than to Christ for salvation, I say that this would apply to every wrong thing equally with tobacco. I am not at all afraid in this line. My experience and observation of Chinamen point all the other way, namely, they are only too apt to trust Christ for salvation and neglect acts of reformation, without which their trust in Christ is vain.

8. As to the world's use of tobacco, and the defences made for it in increasing trade and using fertile but remote districts, bringing wealth to poor cultivators, giving employment to men, and so on, I believe the whole notion is an utter mistake.

Take Ch'ao Yang Hsien as an illustration. It has more mouths than it can feed, more backs than it can clothe, and yet sets apart land and men to produce tobacco! To what is it like? It is like a large family with a farm a little too small to support them all in comfort. If all the sons were industrious, and cultivated all the land for food and necessaries, ends would about meet. But is it possible to conceive such infatuation? A number of the brothers and a portion of the best of the land are set apart for the

production of tobacco for their own home use! Can such a thing be conceived? The more tobacco the more the scarcity of bread and clothing, and so they send a deputation of the brothers to Heaven to ask for a larger farm or more fertility! Do you think they are likely to get it? Would not the common-sense way be to knock off the superfluous tobacco, and then memorialise Heaven?

And what is true of Ch'ao Yang is true of the world. The human race is one large family not too well off. With industry and well-doing, there would be enough for all. But large portions of the world's productive soil are set apart for providing drink and tobacco, and hosts of men are occupied in manufacturing and ministering these things which are no help to life. The consequence is dearth of necessaries and comforts to large numbers, and when we come to God asking for our daily bread and practically saying our allowance is not enough, what is the answer likely to be?

Suppose a Chinaman some morning meets you. He carries in one hand a pewter whisky-holder, with the other he removes a reeking pipe from his mouth. Blowing out the smoke from his lips, he makes you such a salutation as his hands, encumbered with pipe and pewter whisky-holder, let him, and says, 'Eh, man, I am hard up, my wife and children are hungry, I have had no breakfast.' What would you do?

Could you help laughing in his whisky-inflamed face? You might help him, but would you not feel inclined to advise him to part with his pipe and his pewter? We pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and simple consistency demands that we cease to limit and waste our supply of bread by drinking and smoking.

Whisky is the greater evil of the two, by far the greater, but as far as the simple question of waste goes, whisky and tobacco belong to one and the same class, and differ only in degree. The difference in degree even is much reduced by the more extensive use of tobacco. Women don't usually drink, but, as a rule, they smoke, and thus add much to the aggregate of national waste in this direction. In the Chinese mind, too, the whole three—opium, whisky, and tobacco—get classed together as useless, wasteful indulgences, and when a man sets about reformation, his first and best impulse is to banish the three altogether and be done with them, and thus in this line make the reformation complete.

I am convinced, too, that the Chinese expect this of Christianity. When they hear of our bringing them a superior religion, they are surprised to find tobacco not set aside. If this expectation of theirs rested on error or a mere whim, it would be well to correct it, and not give way to it. But resting as it does on reason and common sense, it is incumbent on us to

meet them on the highest plain of their low level of native forms of righteousness, and in asking them to come to Christ, to see that from whatever standpoint they come, in coming to Christianity they will be stepping upward.

CHAPTER XI

MEDICAL MISSION WORK IN EASTERN AGRICULTURAL MONGOLIA

IN the spring of 1886, in a market-town in Mongolia, I was troubled at the daily sight of a crowd of people, many of them suffering from diseases which I knew I could heal, if they would only let me, with the medicines I had lying in a couple of boxes in my inn. The crowd was partly Mongol and partly Chinese. I could communicate with them in both languages, and was on friendly terms with all. They would consult me about their diseases, but, with only a very few exceptions, they steadily declined my invitation to come to my inn for medicines. One man, even, who brought his wife to have me treat her eyes, made me do so on the public street. Praying and thinking over the matter, God led me to see how to bridge over the gulf that separated the crowds of sufferers from me. They would not come to me, I must go to them. A Mohammedan medicine-seller seemed to be driving a thriving trade under a little cloth tent. I would get a cloth tent like his and try. It was with some fear

and trembling that I set up my tent for the first time at a great fair, and during the first day I had very few patients—some ten or so. Happily, a Bible colporteur was in the same town with his books, and as people would not have drugs they had books and preaching. The second day was little better at first; but later on, a countryman who had got medicine from me sometime before turned up at my stand, related to the crowd how my medicine had cured his wife, and went on to consult about some other patients' diseases. That started the thing. Others took courage and came forward, and from that day to this, wherever my stand has been seen, thither, as a rule, flocked the patients. I move about from place to place, attending local fairs, temple gatherings, and visiting large trading centres. I have stores of books and medicines at three places, and hitherto my means of locomotion has been at most times a donkey, which has carried my two medicine-boxes, the tent, books, and general belongings of my helper and myself.

The manner in which I have been received is great cause for much thankfulness. As a rule, everywhere I have been welcomed and trusted. Opposition has not been wanting; lying rumours have done their worst; medicine-sellers, who say I have ruined their trade, have combined against me; but the Lord has delivered me from them all, and

opened the hearts of the people to me wherever I have gone.

In seven months of 1886, I had between five and six thousand patients. In 1887, I dispensed during nine months of the year, and had between twelve and thirteen thousand patients. In 1888, I had my tent out about nine months. I kept no record of patients, but, comparing the medicines used in 1888 with the quantity used in 1887, I must have seen nearly twenty thousand patients. The going out on to the streets seems essential to success among the people here. Times and again I have tried indoor practice, but it comes to very little. In the inn I can meet only about one-tenth of the patients I can see on the street.

The inconveniences of street dispensing are not few. The weather causes trouble. In summer the sun tries myself and my ointments, but latterly I have done something to combat the heat by putting a double roof in my tent. In winter the cold is excessive. Mild days with no wind are all right, especially when there is a good brick wall to the north; but when a wind pipes up patients and doctor with one consent disappear. In spring, dust-storms are common, and I usually hold out on such occasions till patients fail. But Chinese and Mongols in Mongolia do not care much for dust-storms. Dust and all, patients keep coming; and I remember one day especially, in the market-place,

when, with a good attendance, we had to keep on dispensing most of the day, though the wind was so high that it several times blew away the lids of the medicine-boxes, and the dust was so great that before we were finished boxes, books, clothes, and faces were all one uniform colour.

Rain is a great perplexity. Not to go out on a cloudy day, when other traders go out, seems not right. To go out and be caught in the rain is not well, especially when, travelling as we do, changes of clothes are scarce. If we bundle up our tent when a shower begins, we are sometimes hardly at our inn before the weather clears again. Sometimes, too, a seemingly slight shower becomes a tropical pour. One day, erring on the bold side, we did not take down our tent when rain came, and in a few minutes we were standing in the verandah of a shop, looking at a broad flood sweeping through our tent, with masses of straw and drift matter gathering against the tent-poles.

Another inconvenience is that good stands in good places are hard to get. Most of them are claimed by permanent traders, and to these we have to give way. Latterly, however, this has not troubled us much; we are so well known and so well received that if we are anywhere within sight we do not want for patients and hearers. Drunken men and evil-minded men who oppose us have from time to

time caused us some trouble, but through God's good hand upon us we have always got over such difficulties without once claiming mandarin protection. Many of the Yamên people came as patients, and a word or two from such men in our favour goes a long way towards keeping bad men from molesting us.

One trouble is how to manage a crowd of patients in a market-place. This one shouts, that one is in a hurry, another is drunk and won't wait his turn, another is a Yamên man and claims precedence of all; two or three women stand about painfully on their small feet, wiping the tears from their suffering eyes; still another man has waited 'half a day,' and has a long way to go to his home; the patient being dealt with and getting his own medicine, wants something else for his mother, or his father, or his wife, or child, or for each and all of them, in fact, there seems no getting to the end of his list. It is a happy thing if, in the midst of such a pressing crowd, a gust of wind does not pull up one of the two pins that hold the tent and throw the whole thing about our heads. To keep things in order I have two forms; one for myself and my assistant, the other is for the patients. I insist on every patient being seated as he describes his case. This prevents him and the spectators from pressing forward and crowding, as they are apt to do, and only one man is allowed to speak at a time. 'First come first

served' is the order of the day. As one patient is dismissed from the inner end of the form, each of the two or three seated and waiting their turn moves inward one place, and a new man takes the vacant seat at the outer end of the form. Ordinary countrymen submit gracefully to this arrangement. Proud Confucianists and Yamên men have to be made exceptions, and treated when they appear; and I always insist on giving the precedence to any female patients who may come. In this way something like order can be kept, and dispensing for ordinary cases can be very rapidly performed. On good days the number of patients may range from one to two hundred, and on one very extraordinary, very long summer day, at a great fair, in a great centre, when the dispensing went on from shortly after sunrise till about sunset, I think some four or five hundred cases were attended to.

Many cures are reported, some of them too extraordinary almost for belief. But the Chinese and Mongols believe them, and most, if not all, of our patients are attracted by cases of cure they have known or heard of. Through God's good care over us we have had no serious accident. Great care has to be exercised in giving away medicines. Tell the patient as you like how and when to take the medicine, it is often of no use. He meets some friend who tells him to take it in some other way, and he

does so. To take medicines in double doses is a common practice. Chinese doses of medicine are very large. A patient, looking at the comparatively small dose of foreign medicine, thinks the foreigner has been mean, and given too small a quantity, and so he takes two doses at once. In most cases he quickly repents when he finds the small doses produce a great effect; but I have known men take four doses together and suffer no harm. One mother administered internally, in one dose, a quantity of ointment given her for external application! Next day she brought the infant in her arms, seemingly none the worse for the treatment. The mother was disappointed that the child was no better. This inattention to directions has to be taken into account in dispensing, and makes it impossible to give some medicines, which, if taken in large doses, would do harm.

The amount of actual physical suffering relieved has been great. I am very thankful to God it has been so. But the dispensing of medicines is only a means to an end. The medicines are used as a means to create friendly points of contact with the people, and enable me to convey to them the knowledge of the Gospel. Keeping this object in view, our tent flies in front a sign of six characters: 'The Gospel Hall of the Religion of Jesus;' at the one end is another sign: 'God the Heavenly Father;' at the opposite end is: 'Jesus the Saviour.' Every dose

of medicine, if it is a powder, is first put up in an inner wrapper containing some Gospel truth, printed in sixty-four characters; and as most cases require two or more doses, these again are parcelled up in a larger paper, containing some prominent truth, printed in two hundred characters. In this way Gospel truth is scattered far and wide over the district. Patients, too, are encouraged to buy books, but our main endeavour is to combine preaching and conversation with dispensing.

Some days we are entirely defeated as to preaching. On reaching our stand we find a man already waiting for us. He is a countryman, anxious to get away home to cultivate his field, and asks for some medicine first. As soon as we get our tent up and open our boxes we attend to him, and by the time he is attended to, others come, equally importunate and equally in a hurry. By the time they are attended to, others come, and so the thing may, and sometimes does, go on without break for a whole day. This sometimes happens, but not often. Even when the day begins so, a break mostly occurs, and then we can stand up and preach. As a rule, though we try to begin the day with speaking—and it is pleasant to find how long a crowd of patients and spectators will listen when things go well—sometimes things go excellently, and we have all the opportunity for preaching we desire.

Sometimes interruptions are the order of the day. The ideal order of things would be to have a preaching colleague to go on to the street with me. Taking up his stand close to my tent, he would seldom lack listeners while I attended to the medicines. The numbers who have listened to the Gospel have been great. In 1886, from a daily record kept, my guess was that the audiences amounted to over twenty-three thousand, in 1887 to over thirty-two thousand. That many of these carried away some intelligent impression of the truth is evident from what I have overheard people in the streets and fields saying of me, when they deemed I was beyond earshot. The main facts and doctrines of Christianity have been stated and understood far and wide over a large extent of country, and in each of the three centres to which I most frequently resort a few Chinese have believed and professed Christ.

What is now wanted for the full development of the system and reaping of the sowing is a surgeon, settled at some point as head-quarters, and two or three men to be associated in the work of evangelisation.

One problem has been solved—how to get at the Chinese to doctor them. The thing that now occupies my attention is how to get at the Chinese to save them. The daily sight of crowds of men who need above all things the Gospel which I have to

give them oppresses me. I see no reason in the order of things why the inhabitants of this district should not make the same rush for the Gospel which they have made for the medicines. The dispensing of medicines has established friendly communications between us, and made them trust me to a certain extent. Is it too much to hope that the shrewd Chinaman will see that the doctrine I bring him is as much superior to the native doctrines as my drugs are to the native medicines? Where is the hitch? Is it that the Chinaman's spiritual perception is duller than his material perception? The hindrance can hardly be apathy, for in this district there are a number of sects which flourish, one of which, at least, seems, as far as I can learn particulars, to hold out only benefits in the next life. That sect seems to be well patronised. Why should not Christianity be equally well sought after? It cannot be merely that it is introduced by foreigners. Foreign things a Chinaman takes to eagerly, when he is convinced that they are better than his own. If the Chinaman could be convinced that salvation is true, all the characteristics of his life and nation would impel him towards Christianity. The trouble is, he does not believe salvation to be real, and he does not feel his need of it. Two things we have got to do. Convince the Chinaman that God's offer we bring him is of a real thing; and secondly, that it is of a thing

he needs. This done, China will soon be Christianised.

We have got to do it; not quite that. Except God do it, it will never be done. When we and our endeavours are such that God can use us, and He puts forth this power, the thing will soon be done. The mission-field of to-day perhaps stands in so much need of nothing as an increase of prayer and an increase of faith. With these two things we can definitely expect both that we should come more fully into the lines of God's working, and that the eyes of the Chinaman's heart should be opened. With this all will be right.

CHAPTER XII

LESSONS FROM LIFE IN MONGOLIA

JAMES GILMOUR was very fond of using the incidents of daily life as occasions for spiritual suggestion and reflection. Readers of the *London Missionary Chronicle*, the *Tract Magazine*, and the *Sunday at Home* do not need to be reminded of this habit. They have often been both interested and benefited by the skill and the force with which he utilised seemingly trivial incidents or everyday occurrences in Mongolian life to teach helpful spiritual lessons. These are always as remarkable for sound common sense as for spiritual insight. There was very little of the mystic or of the religious sentimentalist about James Gilmour. He saw truth clearly ; he *lived* the truth he believed ; he kept nothing back, and he tried to arouse or to deepen in other hearts a like trust in Jesus Christ, a like helpful and practical love towards men, manifesting itself in self-denial for their welfare.

From material hitherto unpublished, and from some previously published series, the sections composing this chapter have been taken. All who knew

James Gilmour—and many who did not know him, but who have become familiar with his life—will recognise the man in these incidents.

I. Is there a Bridge or not?

A terrible storm was blowing from the north-east. The cold was intolerable. We were benumbed. The wind howled so that we could with difficulty hear each other speak. Some miles ahead was an inn with a friendly innkeeper; if we could only reach that, we could have warmth, shelter, food, and comfort. But between us and the inn was a river to be crossed. Just at that season of the year this river is so difficult to cross that to avoid it we had made a long détour the day before. But drift-ice had swept away part of a bridge, made our détour of the day before of no use, and thrown us back on the old route, bringing us face to face with the dreaded river. It was not a pleasant prospect, the crossing of that river; and the strange thing about it was, we could get no definite, reliable information about it as to whether there was a bridge or not. Some said there was a bridge, some said there was no bridge. It was perplexing. At last the town, in which was the friendly inn on the other side of the river, appeared in view, and the question was, Would we be able to cross and get into good quarters or would we have to turn back baffled?

Questioning people we met did not go far to solve the difficulty; their contradictory answers only increased the perplexity. At last we met a cart. Eagerly we questioned the men with it. 'Yes, they had come from where we wanted to go to, had crossed the river in question, and there *was* a bridge.' That seemed to settle the thing. But we met three men, and they declared that they had gone to the river brink to cross, had found no bridge, and, being unable to cross, were returning baffled to their inn to wait till the storm should have blown over. Whom were we to believe? Why should there be such contradictory reports on such a question as whether a river immediately ahead of us had a bridge over it or not?

An old resident near the place, when appealed to, settled the question by saying that both reports were true as far as they went, but both were incomplete. The carter was right in saying he had crossed the river by the bridge, and the foot-passengers only told the truth when they said they came to the river brink and were stopped by the unbridged flood. The deep part of the river had a bridge, but the flood had gone beyond the end of the bridge and made a broad icy stream which foot-passengers might well hesitate to ford on such a cold, stormy day. Arriving at the river, we found this was the correct statement of the case. There *was* a bridge over the deepest part of the stream, but it did not span the whole stream, and

the seeming contradiction arose from the fact that the statements were incomplete.

There are a number of things connected with the river of death which lies ahead of us, and the country beyond, on which the information we can gather seems contradictory. We eagerly scan and question, and sometimes it seems that the more we question the deeper we seem to get involved in uncertainty and contradiction. But the explanation is very simple. Our information is not complete. It is all right as far as it goes, but it only goes part of the way. When we get the full statement the seeming contradiction will disappear. 'Now we know in part, then we shall know even as we are known.'

II. Desert Fountains

Crossing a ridge and looking over a valley, we saw on the ridge opposite us flocks and herds standing about in an aimless fashion near some rocks. At that time of the day they should have been scattered abroad over the grassy desert, feeding or resting; what were they doing there? We had seen nothing like it before, and we were puzzled. Arriving there we soon found out the cause. The animals were waiting to be watered, and the well was almost dry. They had to wait till the water gathered, and even then they were not sure to get it, for the flocks

were many and large, and there was not enough for all; men even had to struggle for water, and go short after all. It was pitiful to see the inhabitants come with their pails, go down into the well right to the bottom, and standing on the gravel, attempt to fill their buckets by dipping up the water with a cup, as it slowly trickled into a little pool. It was sorrowful to see the patient animals lingering round the spot in the parching heat of the day with nothing to allay their thirst.

The next place we camped at was the very opposite of this. It was rich in possessing an abundant spring. No well was digged at all, but the water welled up of itself, filled the ample pool, slaked the thirst of all the flocks that came to it, and trickled away down into the lower desert, marking its course by a fresh band of green growth of grass and herbs.

The water of life is not like a well with scanty supply which cannot meet the wants of those who come to it, but like a spring which wells up full and overflowing, relieving all thirst of soul and marking its presence by blessings of this life and social joy in any community where it is allowed to flow. If the Uren Urto men could have had an overflowing spring close to them simply for the asking, would they themselves have gone short, and seen their flocks pining away helpless to relieve them? Or rather, had there been close by them such a flowing

fountain, would they not have flocked towards it, themselves and their cattle leaving the dried-up well?

The Gospel streams of refreshing grace are flowing by you; are you drinking from them, or are you dipping up from the sandy bottom of wells of your own, digging the dregs of comfort and happiness which after all are not enough for you and yours? Oh that men would have the same common sense in things spiritual which they exercise in things temporal! With a bubbling fountain of clear good water sending down the valley a stream from an overflowing pool at the head, no one would dig in hard rock a well with insufficient supply, round which they and theirs would stand thirsting. Incredible as it may seem when looked at in this light, this is what men are doing every day and continually both in times past and now. 'My people,' says the old prophet, speaking the word of the Lord, 'have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.'[1]

It is fact, not poetry or imagination, that God has placed a flowing stream of peace and joy beside every man, and yet many, in place of taking the peace which God gives fully and freely, weary themselves in fruitless attempts at finding peace and

[1] Jeremiah ii. 13.

happiness for themselves in things where neither peace nor happiness is to be found.

III. The Shallow Well

A friend had been showing me round his garden. It was a fruit garden, and, being in China, depended a good deal on irrigation. Going up to his well I found a little mat shed set up near it, and a number of workmen at breakfast. The fire in a little portable forge close by had just gone out, and a number of great steel chisels stood by, newly pointed. A ladder was hung down into the well, and, looking down, I saw that the water had just been dipped out. The well was about fifteen feet deep—ten feet through the soil and five feet into the live rock. Looking down, I saw a fairly good stream of water pouring in. 'What are you going to do?' 'Deepen the well,' he replied. 'Why?' 'To get more water.' On my saying that there seemed to be enough water, my friend said, 'Yes, when the weather is not dry the water is enough to use, but when a drought comes the water is scarce; and that is just the time when the garden needs it most; when the water-supply fails in a drought the garden suffers.'

That well is like many. They are true enough and real enough, only not deep enough. When surrounded with Christian influences, among Christian

people, and specially if in a revival time, when all around are full of Christian life, they too are in good trim. They are not only all right themselves, but join in Christian work, exhorting, cheering, and encouraging others. But when away from Christian influences, among people unfriendly to spiritual things, isolated, and among the worldly, the flow of their spirituality gets low, and, in place of being the source of cheering and encouragement to others, they themselves begin to fail and run dry. What's to be done? Why, just what my host was doing—*dig deeper.*

It is just the want of depth that is the trouble with many Christians. Their Christianity is all right as far as it goes, but there is not enough of it. It is Christ that they know, but their knowledge is not deep enough. They want to set to work to learn Christ more fully. It may take time and effort. Never mind that; it is worth all the trouble. To have a source of life and joy and holy comfort that no adversity or trial can interrupt or dry up is worth any trouble it may take to acquire it. To be able to rejoice always, even in tribulation, and to be the channel of streams of the water of life for the salvation of others is well worth effort and time spent in learning Christ.

God sometimes does with us as was done with that well. A gang of afflictions, adversities, trials,

sufferings, and sorrows are gathered round us, not to cause us needless suffering, but to deepen in us the knowledge of Him. We have a bad time for a while, it may be, for no such process is joyful; but when it is all over we are able to say, 'It was good for me to be afflicted.' Then the joy of knowing not only that there will be streams of grace sufficient for us in all circumstances, but that wherever placed there shall flow forth from us rivers of living water to others! If you do not get all out of your religion that you hoped for, the cause is plain and the remedy simple—you have not gone deep enough, and have only to go deeper in the knowledge of God.

IV. The Unused Well

In desert travelling much depends on finding a well. The route and the length of the daily march are determined by the situation of the wells. But even when a well is found, sometimes there is a disappointment. Many a time our cattle and ourselves have been made glad by the sight of a well in the distance, hoping to camp there and rest, when our Mongols, knowing better, would say, 'It won't do; we must go on.' And why? Go up to the well and look down; there is the water, and plenty of it, not too far down, either, for our ropes and buckets to dip it. May we not camp? 'No,' says the Mongol

'it won't do; the water is bad, because it is not being used;' and to convince us of the truth of this, he would step aside, take a stone, tell us to look down into the well while he threw down the stone and made a splash in the water. He was right, the water was unfit to drink. The smell that came from the splash showed that plainly enough, and we would have to go sorrowfully on. Want of drawing was all that was wrong with it. When the encampment of natives came back, and dipped out the bad water and kept using the well, it was all right, but when left unused and stagnant it became unfit to drink.

In China, too, there are wells which, when drawn from largely, give fairly good water, but which, when used little, say by only one or two families, come to be so bitter that the water is almost unfit for use. The more the well is dipped from, the better is the water.

Has the water which Christ has given you become in you a well of water springing up into eternal life? Then let it flow out. Dip it out, and give it away to others. A Christian who keeps his experience to himself, fails to do much of the good he might accomplish by telling what God has done for his soul. Not only might he lead others to Christ, by telling them the way by which he has been led, but there are many about him whom he might refresh and strengthen with his Christian love and sympathy,

which would be to them that received it as sweet water to a weary traveller from a much-used well. Want of use is the secret of much of the spiritual dissatisfaction and decay in many Christians. Shut up in themselves, they become stagnant and unwholesome, and in looking for sympathy and spiritual help in the world it is necessary, not only to find a Christian, but a Christian whose soul is fresh and sweet, by flowing out in sympathy and helpful love to others.

A selfish Christian is no comfort to any one, a disappointment to any weary traveller who goes to him for strength, and a trouble to himself. How many Christians there are who only want plenty of dipping out!

V. THE NARROW RIVER

My Mongol was in a state of alarm, and did his best to frighten me too. There was, some distance ahead, a stream called the 'Narrow River,' which was reported to be in a state of flood, and how were we to get across it? The stories told of it spoke of men and horses being swept away in its current, and how were we to fare? The terrible force of this river was the staple of the poor man's conversation for a day or two before we came to it. When we reached it, we found a quiet little stream placidly flowing over a good hard bed, and, splashing through it, found

that the water was not higher than our ankles. When we got to the other side, we simply stood and laughed at each other, as we thought of the fears which had troubled us so much.

So it is often in the things of everyday life. Have we not all at times looked forward with fear to some event or crisis of the future which filled us with dread, some change in circumstances, some new step or stage in life which alarmed us, and from which we shrank and lived in trouble and fear as we looked forward to it, and thought of it? And after weeks, or months, or even years of apprehension and dread, when at last we came to the difficulty, how often has it proved to be little or no difficulty at all, and so easily got over, that we wondered how the thought of it should ever have alarmed us! If fears and troubles loom upon you from the future, don't torment yourself before the time, but go on till you come to them, and in many cases you will find that most of the trouble has been imaginary. Some one has said that God helps us to bear the trials He sends us, but leaves us to bear alone those we thus make for ourselves. God does give us the strength necessary to bear the trials He gives us, but may we not say that He also helps us in the imaginary trials, which we in our foolishness and want of faith conjure up for ourselves? Let us, then, notwithstanding all the 'Narrow Rivers' which flow across our path, live trusting,

happy lives, not the heedless, careless life of recklessness, but the restful life of quiet trustfulness—'casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us.'

VI. The Black Water

Notwithstanding the fears of my camel driver, we got without difficulty across the 'Narrow River.' But my Mongol was not done yet. 'Yes,' he said, 'we are across the narrow river all right, but away ahead *is another river*, the "Black Water," *that is no* imaginary difficulty; it is broad, it is deep, it has a muddy bottom, and it is in flood.' I knew this river, and was aware that, compared with the Narrow River, it was a serious obstacle in our journey. I knew it was soft at the bottom, and could believe it was in flood, and to my Mongol's demands of 'How shall we get over it?' could only reply, 'I don't know, let us go on till we come to it.'

We went on till we came to it, and, sure enough, there was all the difficulty which had been anticipated. The muddy bottom was covered by a flood, broader and deeper than usual. We made our camels kneel down, rearranged and restrapped their loads, made them rise up, led them to the brink, and stood looking at the water. There we stood, but how to cross was still the problem to which we could find no solution, when a caravan of camels approached from the other

side. Most of them were light or unloaded, and they came splashing through without hesitation. One of the drivers, seeing us stand there, remarked, 'You cannot cross that way; here, take two of my camels; turn them adrift when you get over, and drive them back to me.' Recognising the good hand of God in this unexpected help, I took the camels. In a few minutes we were safely across, and the camels, eager to gain their own company, made no difficulty in returning after their caravan. And thus without difficulty or trouble we found ourselves safely over the formidable Black Water, which had troubled our minds as we marched up to it.

Though men have crossed many of the narrow rivers of the ordinary trials of life, and have found a way provided by God for them out of all their difficulties, how often it is that the Black Water of death looms across the boundary of life, and throws fear and gloom over much of the path of life, which otherwise would be bright and cheerful! Changes and trials, difficulties and even disasters they can get through, and have got through, but death—the gloomy, dark, solitary passage of this swelling Jordan—death makes them afraid with a fear which it is difficult to comfort. And yet why should it? Let us go on with the journey of life bravely, trustfully, faithfully, till the brink is reached, and then He in whom we have trusted will not fail us, nor leave us for help to

cross the river to the kindness of a strange fellow-traveller, but He Himself will be there to bear us over. Why should we all our lifetime be in bondage through fear of death, when He who has promised is faithful, and will safely see us through the river? Let us, then, not only trust Him for things of life, but, looking to the end, live in the feeling of him of old who said, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for *Thou* art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.'

VII. The Mud Tent

One winter a Mongol had a terrible run of 'bad luck,' as he called it. Things did not go well with him. He lived right in the centre of a little encampment, and while other people got on well enough, his cattle died in considerable numbers. As usual, recourse was had to the lamas, and, as usual, they proceeded to make a fuss and a mystery over what was as plain as daylight. It so happened that the man from whom this unlucky Mongol had inherited all he possessed, was one of the very few Mongols who have enterprise and originality, and had taken it into his head that a mud-built hut would possess some important advantages over a felt tent; so, carrying out his idea, he erected one. It proved quite a success. It was cheaper in construction,

much cheaper in maintenance, more comfortable by far, and more sanitary than the ordinary felt structure, and after enjoying much comfort in it for some years, he left it among his other possessions to this heir.

Now it so happened that this enterprising man had a little enterprise in the region of intellect and religion as well as in things material, and doubtless his intellectual courage was not pleasant to the priests, who like, and for the most part are accustomed to have, things all their own way. When, therefore, this owner of the inherited mud hut came to them for advice about his bad luck, it is not to be wondered at that, enemies to all progress, they should have pitched upon this eyesore of a mud building, and condemned it. They actually told the unlucky owner that if he wanted to change his luck, he must pull down that mud hut, and put up a felt hut. And pull it down he did. This, however, did not change his luck; nor was it likely to. The source of his ill-luck was not the mud tent, but his own idleness. It was not the mud tent that killed his cattle, but the fact that he lay asleep in bed, or sat in his tent eating and drinking, or talking and gambling, or rode about the country seeing his friends and playing the gentleman, while his neighbours were up early and late, watering and tending their cattle, and gathering what food for them they could, and thus successfully

tiding them through the winter. His cattle, neglected, got feeble and died, and the lamas, to please him and themselves, and partly too really superstitious, laid all the blame on the mud tent.

It is said that the French courtiers who heard the fugitive King James relate his misfortunes, had no difficulty in accounting for his son-in-law being able to secure a throne from which his father-in-law was glad to flee; and half-an-hour's friendly intercourse with this mud-tent man showed me fully the explanation of his misfortunes. He was lazy, careless, improvident, and self-indulgent, and there was the secret of the whole matter. That his predecessor succeeded where he was failing was no wonder. The old man was an early riser, and a terror to all late risers. When his cough, or the clearing of his throat, was heard throughout the cluster of tents in the still morning, people rose hastily, threw their clothes over them, and hurried out to open the top felt that covered the chimney, and, still in haste, lit their fires, to let the smoke be seen issuing from the top. If they did not, they were sure to hear him shouting, 'What! in bed still? why don't you get up and work?' And though they were in no sense his relatives, he was such a terror to lazy ones, that they were glad to get up and begin the day. His successor! I arrived there one day after a march, and he came out to meet me in his stockings! And yet

in amazement he asked the lamas to divine for him why he was not successful!

If a man is lazy, don't let him ask why he is unsuccessful. If a man will not use fairly and well the abilities God has given him, don't let him be surprised that he does not get on well. Some men are overmatched in the world, and even with all exertion and over-exertion, life is to them a struggle. But, as a rule, the reward is to the man who has diligence and perseverance. 'Seest thou a man diligent in business, he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.'

VIII. Luck

A Mongol said his luck was bad. He was surrounded by misfortunes, oppressed by poverty, over head and ears in debt, his cattle died, his eldest son was killed, himself was not over robust, and so in this extremity he consulted the priests and living Buddhas as to what he should do to change the luck. 'Read prayers and build pyramids,' was the substance of the reply. Prayers were read by hired priests, pyramids were reared in the indicated localities, but still the luck was the same, and things went from bad to worse. To the temples and lamas recourse again was had, and the reply this time informed him that the place of his habitation was unlucky, and that

he must change his abode. So messengers were sent about to bring specimens of sand and earth from different places, that the priests might divine for him a lucky place to live in. A place was at length fixed on, and the removal made, but the luck remained the same, and in a short while matters got worse, till at last the man closed his unhappy career by death.

Luck! There was no mystery at all about it. It was drink that ruined the man and his affairs. Build pyramids, change his locality! If he had changed his habits, it would have done more for him than all the recommendations of the priests and living Buddhas, who, while making pretence to divine, knew well enough what was the matter with him, but lacked the courage to speak plainly and give advice which they knew would be distasteful.

There are also such people in Britain, people who are always unfortunate, and always saying, 'It is just my luck,' when it is nothing of the sort, but all their own doing; men who, like the Mongol, think a change of place would do them good and change the luck, when the change they want is not of place but of habit. Let them go to America, Canada, or Australia, they succeed no better, and never will have better success till they have better habits. It is good for such men when they have friends about them who do not shrink from the unpleasant task of truly and honestly telling them their faults. There

are cases in which men are involved in difficulties through no fault or failing of their own, but, as a rule, these men are the last to complain about their luck, and it is the men who are never done grumbling about their luck, of whom there is reason to suppose that they are laying the blame of their misfortunes in the wrong place. Learn not the way of the heathen, either in blaming luck for your own faults, or in failing to point out to a faulty man, asking advice, the true cause of his misfortunes. 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend.'

IX. The Aurora Borealis

After hundreds of miles of comparatively dull travelling on the plain, we found ourselves, late one night, at the foot of a high mountain, or range of mountains rather, which we had to cross. Some lesser heights earlier in the journey our camels had managed, with a good deal of difficulty, it is true, but with no assistance beyond what the caravan itself furnished, to struggle over; but this mountain was not to be so surmounted, and among the outfit of the company the Mongols had not forgotten to bring bricks of tea with which to hire oxen from the inhabitants who live at the foot of the mountain, and make a trade of assisting travellers to cross. Even with the hired oxen it was a hard long struggle in

the darkness up the steep rough road, which wound its way through the wood up to the summit. For a time we watched the slow, laborious process, and marked the fire that flew from the iron rims of the wheels as they dashed about among the great stones.

Tired at length of the monotony and many stoppages and detentions, my fellow-traveller and I slowly drew ahead, and reaching the highest point of the ridge, and looking away to the north, we were entranced by the striking display of northern lights that played on the horizon. By-and-by the caravan came up, and the Mongols soon had their attention fixed on what we were gazing at. But their feelings were very different from ours. What enchanted us with its beauty, filled them with terror, and, forgetting everything else, they betook themselves to their prayers and beads, making many repetitions, and adding boughs to the already immense pile of branches raised there and decorated with flags in honour of the local spiritual lord. The Mongols, too, were shocked to find us cheerful and admiring in the presence of what they dreaded as the angry omen of wrath and disaster about to come upon them. 'Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of the heaven, for the heathen *are* dismayed at them,' said the prophet of old, and so it is now. The beautiful Aurora is an emblem of terror to them, and our guides were panic-stricken

when, about the middle of the night, they gained the summit, and found these coloured lights streaming away in all their beauty in the north.

Comets, too, with their 'smoky tails,' as the Mongols say, are greatly feared by the superstitious inhabitants of the plain. They 'bode ill,' they think, and are looked upon as partly causing the ill; and it is rather difficult to free them from the idea that there is some connection between the phenomenon and the disaster when every evil such as drought, deep snow, or cattle plague, is looked upon as the ill-luck caused or foreshadowed by the last astronomical phenomenon they beheld, though years may have elapsed since a comet or an Aurora was seen.

'Bad luck' is believed in beyond the bounds of Mongolia. One night I was startled at seeing a Russian lady suddenly make a dash at the table and snatch up a candle; then, as if a narrow escape had been effected, turn to her daughter and reprove her for removing one of the four candles, thus leaving the unlucky number of three on the table! Yet she was a well-educated lady! One morning I found a mother, a well-educated British woman, distressed because the portraits of her absent children had been stolen, a fact which she feared boded ill to them. And again I have seen people alarmed at the whining of a dog in the night, or the crowing of a

cock at unseasonable hours, or the spilling of salt, as if the things were unlucky or boded disaster or death. And this, too, in a Christian country!

God rules over all, arranges everything; nothing happens without His permission; in His keeping we are safe. Why, then, should we be afraid of omens, or alarmed at what people call ill-luck; afraid of accidents and sounds, as if we were heathen, and had no God to trust to? Heathen know no better, but we should not imitate them. As a missionary I have sometimes felt myself helped to be patient with the superstitions of the heathen, by noticing how much superstition there is in the minds of people who have been born and bred in a Christian land. Let superstitious fears be lost in loving, full trust of God.

X. Reading Buddhist Scriptures

Coming upon a wealthy Mongol who was in the act of flitting, I found that part of his effects consisted of ten immense volumes piled up in a little stack near the spot where a tent was to be erected. Each volume was about two feet long, eight inches broad, and proportionately thick, and the whole formed rather a bulky little library. The books were carefully wrapped up in cotton cloth bands, and I asked the bystanders if they, like a neighbour I had met before, kept these things as a talisman or had them read?

'Oh no,' they said, 'they are read through every year—our master sees to that.'

'It must be a lot of work for him to read through all these large volumes,' I said.

'Not at all,' they replied, 'it is easily managed. A tent is set up, ten priests are invited from the temple, and they do the reading.'

In the morning they take their seats in order, the volumes are handed round, and the whole ten of them beginning simultaneously, with no regard to each other, with no listeners, each man reads away at his own particular volume, in a loud voice, or a low voice, just as may suit his throat better, himself even not necessarily paying any attention to what he is reading, having before him the one fixed idea that to get through that volume is a day's work, and that he must be finished by sunset. This is really a fair statement as to the manner in which these Buddhist books are read.

Now no Christian would for a moment dream of having his Bible read in this profitless way; but there is a danger to be guarded against in Bible reading. Some people arrange to read through the whole Bible in a year, and a more numerous class read daily a stated portion, such as a chapter, morning and evening. Both systems are useful, but in both it may happen, if care be not taken, that the mind fails to grasp well the meaning of what is read, and the

tongue, in fact, glides over the words. The merely perfunctory reading of so many verses or chapters may thus become something a little like the heathen reading of the Buddhist writings we have been speaking of. A very good way to counteract this tendency is to read some books on Bible subjects, after the perusal of which the sacred narratives will be found, when next read, full of new interest and suggestiveness. Then, again, a powerful preventive to careless reading is to approach the Bible, not with the idea of reading as a duty a certain portion of it, but with earnest prayerfulness seeking to find the teaching of its lessons, to correct the wrong and strengthen the right that is in our lives.

Some men say they know all that is in the Bible, and give up reading it; they say that there is nothing new for them to find in it.

When at sea I noticed that day by day the captain and officers of the ship got out their instruments and 'took the sun.' Why? Was it to make astronomical discoveries? To see something new in the sun? Not a bit of it. Navigators are continually looking at the sun. Day after day, if clouds do not prevent it, during all the years of their voyaging they keep 'taking the sun,' not to find out something new, but to find out where they are. And that is the reason we should read the Bible—to see just where we are on our heavenward journey. A mariner who never took

the sun and never took observations would have a poor prospect of ever reaching his port, and would have to go begging his longitude and latitude from any passing vessels he happened to fall in with. When I find a man who does not read his Bible, I fear that he is not making the voyage of life well, and doubt much if ever he'll reach the desired haven, and his belief being founded not on the Word of God, but borrowed from any one he happens to be associated with, he can have but little certainty for his guidance.

I noticed, too, on board ship that the mere looking at the sun was but a part of the daily scientific routine of navigating the ship. The exact position of the sun, as indicated by the instruments, being obtained, the officers would retire to their cabins, go through a seemingly elaborate process of calculation, and for exactness' sake compare results. Then they would declare the position of the ship and the progress made in the last twenty-four hours. The observing of the sun merely furnished the data for calculation. This is the true use to make of the Bible, to read it that we may see whether our conduct and doings are right; after reading should come the consideration, the application of the truths to our own case and state, the examination to see whether we are in the right way, and to see, too, if our progress is satisfactory. If a seaman merely looked at

the sun, called out the figures indicated on his instrument, and made no calculation to find the position of his ship, what would be the use of the observation? As profitless is it to read a portion of Scripture, put away the book, and think no more of it. If the portion of Scripture read were meditated upon, there would be no danger of profitless reading, and it would not be so difficult as it sometimes is for the reader to remember where he left off yesterday. I am not surprised that the heathen should get over their Scripture-reading in a perfunctory manner. Much, very much of it, would yield little that is profitable even to diligent meditation. But with us it is different. God's Word will well repay meditation; for 'every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.'

XI. The Tied-up Book

Hunting in a Mongol's cupboard I came upon a neatly done-up yellow paper parcel. I was about to open it, when the master of the house, noticing me, interrupted me with 'Oh, don't untie that, leave it alone.' I then suggested that, if I could not be allowed to open it, perhaps he himself would undo it, and let me see what was in it. 'Oh no,' said he, 'I could not

think of opening it; it contains some Buddhist sacred writings which a great priest, who passed through this part of the country some years ago, tied up for me, saying prayers over it, and it has not been undone since, and it is not to be undone.' 'What, then,' I asked him, 'is the use of it tied up so and left unread for years?' 'Oh,' he said, 'it brings good health and prosperity, success and good luck to my flock, my family, and myself, making me prosperous and my cattle fat.' So there it had been for years, and there it probably remains still in the character of a talisman and nothing more.

Of some Bibles might not the same be said? They are not wrapped up and put away, and no visitor would be forbidden to touch them; but there they are, laid away in the best room, left there, dusted like any other piece of furniture, and not often if ever used. When a guest in a strange house I sometimes seem to know the inmates—so far, at least, when I see in some place near, within easy reach, a number of Bibles, all of them more or less the worse for wear, and put away somewhat irregularly. I seem to know that the books are there for use, not ornament, and am not usually far off the mark when I guess that before long I shall see them produced for morning or evening family worship or both. In trying to estimate the character of a stranger, so far as it goes, it tells all in his favour that his Bible

should not be in too good a state of preservation.

XII. Carrying Sacred Books

At large temples, during almost any season of the year, people laden with a huge volume of the Buddhist sacred writings, strapped across their shoulders, may be seen walking round and round the temple. The idea is that carrying a sacred book is a work of merit. They do not know what the book contains, they never try to read a word of it, they simply carry the thing round and round, and believe that benefit will come to them thus.

Not quite so extreme as this, but partly in the same line, are those who of a Sunday are seen carrying their Bible and prayer book or hymn book to and from church or chapel, but who make little or no home use of them. I like to see a Bible that not only is carried, but bears marks of being read. A great many Bibles on being opened will be found to be much too clean inside. When I see Bibles in Scotland and hymn books in England on the streets, I sometimes wonder how much they are used at home.

XIII. Bato's Devotions

One of my Mongol travelling servants was a priest who on ordinary occasions did not show much

devotion, but who, when afraid, gave extra care to his prayers. When things were going well with him one might look in vain for days and see nothing of his beads, but whenever we got into trouble of any kind, out would come his rosary, and he would keep muttering away at his prayers with great apparent earnestness. As soon as the trouble was tided over or the danger was past, his devotion and his beads would disappear together, and be neither seen nor heard of till another fright called them forth.

There are men in Christian countries whose religion is pretty much of the same nature. They are earnest and prayerful by fits and starts. Danger of any kind, sickness, or a storm at sea, makes them very devout for the time being, but the fear goes past and the religious fit disappears with it, to reappear simultaneously with the next danger. Whatever this is, it can hardly be said to be Christianity. What a calmness in danger is imparted by the faith which begun long ago has grown strong through years of daily communion with Christ!

I like to think of the godly old Scotchman, who, while the ship was drifting towards the rocks, sat so calm among the panic-stricken passengers, that at length a woman said to him, 'You hardened man, will not even this make you pray?' She mistook his peace with God and fearlessness of trust for reckless-

ness, till he replied, 'I pity those who are only beginning to pray now.'

XIV. Put on that Pot

I was standing in the cold at the door of a tent which I did not like to enter, as I heard the voice of the owner at his prayers. The servant came along and asked, 'What are you standing there for?' I said, 'I hear your master saying his prayers, and I don't want to disturb him.' 'Disturb him!' replied the servant, 'go in and sit down.' I went in and sat down, and then and often afterwards I found that I was in no sense disturbing him much. He looked at me and went on with his prayers, and by-and-by I found that he and others when saying their prayers were not much engaged in thinking about what they were saying, that, in fact, for the most part they did not know the meaning of the words they were repeating, and the praying was little more than a mechanical operation performed by the mouth. Without stopping his prayers, almost without altering the tone of his voice, I found him a little later on interjecting such orders as, 'Put on that pot,' 'Mend the fire,' 'Add some more water,' 'Shut the door.'

On one occasion when riding through the desert we were being entertained at a rich man's tent, and his daughter came in and set about her morning

devotions. She did not, as she might have done, go into another tent and shut the door, and be private; no, she saw no need for that, but right there beside us she spread down a calf-skin, and making her prostrations, and rising up with all her ornaments jingling about her, repeated away at her prayers in our presence. Meanwhile the father was talking to us and getting from us all the news of the districts through which we had passed, and, as soon appeared, the daughter was listening with interest as she prayed, and in a short while began to make remarks, and ask questions, and take part in the conversation, going on with her prayers all the while.

In Christian lands do not people sometimes attach great importance to the mere saying of prayers, forgetting that the mere form without the spirit is nothing? Do not men sometimes join in a prayer at family worship or in the sanctuary, and, though they bow in the attitude of prayer, yet attend so little to what is being said, that, when they raise their heads at the end of it, they can hardly tell what they have been praying for? More than this, is it not sometimes the case that when men are praying in private, or leading in public prayer, thoughts come in and the mind begins to wander away to other subjects? Is not this to mock God?

We are amazed at the heathen giving orders and carrying on conversation while praying; but if we

pray without the spirit, and with our thoughts wandering, what are we better than they?

XV. SIN *VERSUS* MERIT

Buddhism in Mongolia resolves itself ultimately simply into a case of sin *versus* merit. A man may have many sins; that does not matter if he has plenty of merit. So he pays attention more to making merit than to avoiding sin. Sometimes, too, he deliberately commits sin, believing that there is no difficulty in the matter; he can turn up a little more merit and it will be all right. And thus it comes that the most religious man in a community, that is, the man who pays most attention to the things of religion, may be the most sinful. Just as the richest man can afford to spend most money. A Mongol thinks that at the end of his life there will be a sort of judgment, in which his merit will be balanced against his demerit. If his merit is more, all right; if his demerit is greater, then he'll suffer. A man may at the same time have a large quantity of sin and a large quantity of merit. Merit, he believes, cancels sin, so he does not seek so much to avoid sin as to cancel it by his works of merit, and his repetition of prayers or charms. In place of making men holy, it encourages sin, by affording what is regarded as a way of escaping the punishment while deliberately

going on with the evil. It is little more than a device by which men think they can sin with impunity.

Looked at in this way, it is not to be wondered at that Buddhism fails to make men holy. In fact, it seems to have given up the attempt; and in looking at it I am often led to think of those two passages of Scripture, 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness;' and 'If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast forth, and trodden under foot.'

It is said that there are some men who look upon Christianity in the same way that Buddhists look on their religion, namely, as a means to escape the penalty of sins which they refuse to leave. A man sometimes feels good after he has attended some religious services and worshipped in God's house, feels as if he had squared up and cleared up old scores, feels as if the attendance to the things of religion has cancelled his guilt. Some men who have been professing Christians for twenty or thirty years are little if any freer from sin than they were at first, and if their religion has not freed them from sin it has done nothing for them. 'He shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.' If a man then is not saved from his sins, in what has his religion benefited him? In what is he different from the heathen, who goes on sinning and making

merit? Let us not deceive ourselves. 'No man can serve two masters.' 'He that committeth sin is the servant of sin.' 'If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' A man who is as he was, and sins as he did before, has nothing to do with Christ, for Jesus saves His people from their sins.

XVI. When Sick, a Priest; when Well, a Layman

Calling at a tent I found the mother and daughter hard at work making robes, which by their colour I knew were meant for a priest. On making inquiries I found they were for one of the sons of the family whom I had formerly known as a layman. I remarked that hitherto he had been a blackman, as a layman is called, and they at once replied, 'Oh yes, but he is sickly, and we are setting him up as a lama, in the hope that this may make him well!' Calling some time afterwards, I found the lad still a layman, and on asking about his lamaship, was told, quite as a matter of course, that having recovered from his sickness they had not made him a priest, but let him remain a blackman.

Another case was that of a Government officer who I found had shaved his head, laid aside his button, put on the yellow garments, and was living as a priest, in the hope of escaping from a disease

which had afflicted him for over a year. The Chinese Government, however, refused to receive his demission of office as final, gave him an indefinite time to play the lama and get well of his disease, on the distinct understanding that at his recovery he should return to the world and perform his duties as before! And this arrangement seemed so perfectly just and reasonable, both to the man himself and to his friends, that it called forth no remark.

The judge was sick,
  The judge a priest would be;
The judge was well,
  The judge, no priest was he.

XVII. THE MAN WHO LIT THE LANTERN AND WENT TO SLEEP

Travelling through the desert once in a cart that formed part of a caravan, I found that when darkness came on my Mongol was always careful to stop the cart and demand a candle for the lantern which hung at the shaft. I would give him the candle, and he would light it and march on, singing on his camel or talking to his neighbour, paying little or no attention to the cart or the road, which was shone upon by the light of the candle he had been so urgent to procure.

On one occasion, when awake in the night, I looked out and found that we had completely separated from the caravan, and were alone on the

desert. The lantern was alight and burning brightly, but we had wandered from the road and from our companions, because the Mongol who led my cart was asleep. On no account would he have travelled without a light; but what was the light to him when he was asleep?

There are not a few men in this country who might claim kindred with my Mongol. They would not be without a Bible. If Government prohibited the Bible, they would be the first to object to such an interference, and the loudest to denounce the tyranny. But they get their Bible and keep it, and seldom or never read it.

Another man is very anxious that there should be a pure Gospel ministry. He would not 'sit under' a man who was not earnest and 'sound,' and yet he goes on paying little attention to what he hears; having the light and sleepily disregarding it, and going anywhere but the right road. By all means insist on having the light, but when you have it be careful to follow it. It is good to have the light, but it is useful only if we follow it.

XVIII. The Man who Carried Too Much

Before starting on my first evangelising tour among the Mongols, I asked how much a camel could carry, and made up loads for each animal to

the full amount. For awhile all went well. At last we reached the foot of a steep hill, and one of the camels striking work, we came to a standstill. Urging and pressing was useless, the animal would not move, and there was nothing for it but to put up for the night in a Chinese inn near at hand. Next day the camels were again loaded, and another attempt made to face the hill; but it was no use, the camel simply looked at the hill and refused to move. We had again to put back to the inn, and then I was convinced that my camels were too heavily loaded, that I had started on my journey with too many things, and that many desirable and useful things, and even some things deemed necessary, had to be left behind.

After reducing the loads very much, and leaving behind one camel, the hill was once more faced and successfully climbed, and the whole journey was safely accomplished.

How many men start in life with too heavy loads. A young couple arranging for their marriage, and calculating their means, take a fine house, furnish it nicely and start life imposingly, but have not gone far before they come to a hill of difficulty, such as straitened income or enlarged expenditure through some unavoidable cause, such as commercial depression or family sickness, and find they cannot go on till they have reduced their style and left part of their

grandeur behind them. The Christian man, too, sometimes finds he has to lighten his baggage, if he is to continue his heavenward journey. He would gladly follow Jesus, and have at the same time the good opinion of the world, be famous among the learned, applauded among the eloquent, or noted for wealth among the rich. Starting with all this gear, he does not go far before he finds he cannot take all these things and go on; so there is nothing for it but to call a halt, overhaul his plans and schemes, lay aside what he cannot carry, and with such things as do not hinder his following Jesus and growth in grace, pursue his journey.

Ask almost any intelligent and living Christian man well past middle life, and he will be able to give you a catalogue of aims, ambitions, and hopes, with which he started life, but which he found it necessary to lay aside and be lightened of, in order that he might be able to continue his heavenward journey at all.

A traveller cannot have all the comforts of home, every pilgrim towards the celestial city must have but a limited amount of baggage, and if we are wise we shall be ready to lay aside every weight that hinders us in our Christian race. If we have been foolish enough to start with too much, let us be wise enough to leave behind everything which would stop our progress.

XIX. The Man who would not Keep the Path

I once travelled with a camel-driver who had a habit of walking just a little way off the road, and he would say it was softer for the camel's feet, and saved his own boots, to be just far enough from the beaten track to walk on the grass. In theory this sounded all very well, but in practice he sometimes, little by little, veered away from the road, till we had gone quite out of our way; and on one occasion we had some difficulty marching through soft land before we regained our road.

Many a man makes a like mistake in things spiritual. He says that in business and intercourse with men, in social relations and recreations, to be strictly upright, straightforward, and distinctly Christian in all things, would make the path of life rough and hard for him, bringing upon him loss, ridicule, and scorn. And so to go smoothly and softly, he steps aside a little from the king's highway, and is not visibly and distinctly Christian in all he is and does. He hides his light, and is ashamed to acknowledge Christ among men of the world. Question him about it, and he would answer, like my old camel-driver, that he had no intention of leaving the road; but that there was no special merit in being uncomfortable or suffering needlessly, and so he was only walking on the soft to save his feet. This

sounds all very fine, but if it is persevered in it will end as my camel-driver ended, in wandering far from the road, and it will be well if the wandering is noticed soon enough to admit of being put right, even at the trouble and toil of returning to the road by a difficult march.

In everything distinctly and fully obeying Christ may be hard walking sometimes; but it is safe. Side-paths may be softer; but they are dangerous. Keep in the way, and be safe.

XX. The Man who Found a New Path

Coming through the desert once I saw the road bend away to the right and make a long detour. Thinking to shorten the way, I left the track and kept straight on. The way seemed all clear before us, and we met no obstacle till, down in a slight hollow, we came upon a deep ravine worn out by water, the perpendicular sides of which stood up like walls and hindered our passage. There was nothing for it but to turn away up and follow the valley till we struck again into the road by leaving which we hoped to save time. In place of saving time we lost a good deal.

In the present restless and improvement-loving age of the world, it would be well to remember that many time-honoured institutions and doctrines may

be right and best, though, at first sight, it may seem that they are causelessly cumbersome, and had better be departed from. There often are very good reasons for modes of action and the existence of things which do not appear at once, and often improvements which seem desirable when about to be entered upon, are discovered to be impracticable when followed out. Many a man after deriding some custom or doctrine as old-fashioned, and striking out a new path for himself, finds to his cost that he has overlooked some steep ravine which stops his path, and sends him after all back to the old way.

I am not here speaking against all departures from what is old and established, or supposing that all such new paths are to be disastrous, but I am warning against the rash idea some people seem to have, that a thing must be right because it is new, and that a custom or belief must be wrong because it is old. New paths and doctrines should be entered upon with caution and only after sufficient exploration.

I remember once making one in a great river of people flowing out of a great city some miles into the country to see a sham fight. At a certain point of the road the living stream poured over a fence, ran up a hill to the left of the road and disappeared over the ridge. Coming up to this ridge, we found that the leaving the highway was a mistake, and that the crowd flowed down the other side of the steep,

trending back again to the highway. Those who were not strangers but knew the road smiled at us as we clambered over the fence on to the highway after our fruitless excursion, and we learned that sometimes an improved path trodden by the feet of multitudes even is only a mistake.

Detours that cost only a little time and exertion in travelling an extra mile or two of road, are, after all, harmless things. But all detours are not harmless, and some of them cost more than time and labour. There is sometimes danger. On one occasion when in the desert we ascended a height to shape a course over a tract of country through which there was no road. My camel-driver was for going out of our way and getting into a beaten path, but I objected to going round, and insisted on taking the nearest way by cutting straight across. We did cut straight across, and got on well enough till we came to some soft-looking land. Another consultation ensued, when I again overruled the cautious and round-about counsels of the native by deciding on the straight-across route. We started, and in a few seconds were, camels and all, floundering and sinking in a bog. A good deal of dexterity and sudden action, guided by presence of mind, for most of which the native deserves the praise, landed part of our caravan safely back again on the firm ground from which we had started, but one camel sank his long legs deep down

into the mire, and his great clumsy broad feet held him down by a result of atmospheric pressure, something similar to that which is often illustrated by boys planting a wet sucker on the pavement. We had a deal of work with this camel. Not only was he helpless himself, but when we attempted to lift him, his feet sucked him down fast, and for a while it seemed as if we would have to abandon him altogether. The skill of my Mongol, however, and our united perseverance prevailed. With difficulty the camel was rolled over on one side, and this brought out a couple of his legs, then he was rolled over on his other side, and that brought out his other two legs, and after assisting him on to his feet we managed eventually to guide him back over the morass to the firm ground at the edge.

All that we got by our short cut was defeat, mud, exhaustion and loss of time, for after all we had to go away round to the long road which we disdained to follow at first.

Again, I say it, take warning, when going off after new methods and doctrines. It is not for a moment to be supposed that there are to be no new methods and doctrines in the world, but some people seem to think that because a thing is old it is wrong, and because a thing is new it is right, and new paths entered on in this blind and foolish way will mostly end in disappointment, or disaster, or even ruin.

One would almost suppose it must have been some old desert traveller who first uttered the words: 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.'

XXI. The Wolves and the Mongols

Sometimes travellers in Mongolia are looked upon by their friends as having run the risk of being attacked by wolves. This is a misapprehension. In Mongolia proper wolves do not attack men. In Russia on the north, and in China on the south, men are attacked and sometimes killed by wolves, but danger to men from wolves is quite unknown over almost the whole of Mongolia. How this comes I do not know. Perhaps the breed of wolves north and south of Mongolia is different from and fiercer than the wolf of the plains; or perhaps the Mongol wolf can always get mutton and beef, and camels' flesh, and horseflesh, in such abundance that it never learns to attack man. I do not know. The Mongols have a very flattering theory on the subject of their immunity. It is this, that Russians and Chinamen are afraid of wolves, and run away from them, while Mongols are brave and run at them.

Whether or not this makes all the difference is, I think, doubtful, but the statement is true. Whenever a Mongol, whether a man, woman, or a child,

sees a wolf, at once and as if by instinct he rushes at the beast, shouting, yelling, and brandishing any stick or whip he can lay hands on at the moment. The noise is enough to fluster even a cool-headed man, not to talk of a beast, and frequently the Mongol pursuit of a wolf means something more serious than noise. At the first yell of the children who have spied the spoiler of their folds, men who have been lazily smoking round the tent fire, drop their pipes, dash out of their tents, fling themselves on the horses standing ready saddled close by, and armed with horse-catchers, poles some fifteen feet long, in a few seconds are scouring the plains with a speed almost swifter than the wind, and woe betide the wolf if they get between him and the hills in time to throw the noose over his head. There is nothing that throws a quiet Mongol community into instantaneous action with such electric suddenness as the sight of a wolf, and there seems to be nothing a wolf detests so much as to see a yelling Mongol rushing at him.

And the Mongol theory and practice towards wolves may be right. Treated in this ostentatiously hostile manner for generations, it may be that the wolf has an inherited dread of his enemy. The Chinaman, on the other hand, when he sees a wolf, thinks his last hour has come, and flees, if his terror leaves him strength and presence of mind enough to flee; and

the Mongols say that wolves sometimes attack and devour Chinamen. It is the delight of the Mongol to tell stories in which bold Mongols faced and destroyed wolves from which armed Chinamen fled in dismay, throwing away their weapons as they ran. After all there may be something in the Mongol's view. Chinamen and Mongols dress so differently, that even when not much more than small figures on the horizon, Mongols and Chinese can be distinguished, and it is not improbable that wolves may distinguish them, and regard them almost as of a different race. The Mongol theory, at any rate, is that a wolf knows a Chinaman and runs at him, but flees from a Mongol.

Cares, fears, and trials, and difficult duties, are very much like what Mongol wolves are said to be—dangerous to those who fear them, but cowards before those who face them bravely. Let us then not be dismayed before them, but meet them courageously, not in the off-hand, reckless way some men go through life, but in faithful dependence on our Heavenly Father, who knows what we have need of before we ask Him, and on whom we may cast all our care, for He careth for us. Doubts and fears when quailed before grow bold and menacing, like the Chinaman's wolf, but when boldly met, and in God's strength looked in the face, falter and shrink away, and are put to flight, like the Mongol's wolf. Godly

courage is a Christian duty that is strongly insisted upon in the Scriptures, as in the case of Joshua, where with reiteration we find the servant commanded to be strong in the Lord, and of a good courage. And in the case of Jeremiah more urgent language still is used, when the prophet is warned not to be afraid of their faces, lest God confound him before them.

In short, want of courage in the things of life amounts to a distrust of God, under whose care and protection His people are. It is a want of faith, an unfaithfulness which dishonours God, and as such is to be avoided. Learn the habit of rushing at the wolf, and he'll learn the habit of running away from you.

XXII. 'THE WOLF CATCHETH THEM'

All at once a terrible outcry broke the sleepy afternoon stillness, and every one within hearing understood the cause at once, and joined in the screaming and shouting. A wolf was among the flock! The able-bodied men and swift boys darted from the tents and made for the flock, and in a few minutes the wolf was seen retreating towards some sandhills, pursued by all the dogs in the neighbourhood. The flock was brought back, and with it two torn and bleeding sheep, which the wolf had caught and torn. It was the old story. The carelessness

of the shepherd had brought disaster on his flock. For a little he had gone into a tent to speak to a friend, or smoke a pipe, or drink a cup of tea, and just then all at once the wolf, which had probably been lurking round for some time waiting its opportunity, came cautiously out from the low sandhills, crept cunningly up, and leaping among the sheep, scattered them, hastily tearing those he could reach before he was driven off.

To the honour of a Mongol shepherd be it said, he never fears a wolf, and never deserts his sheep through cowardice; when he sees a wolf he rushes at him; but carelessness is the Mongol's great fault and the wolf's only opportunity, and the wolf, crouching among the grass, has often time to do damage before he is noticed. In defence against a wolf a sheep can do simply nothing, and if the shepherd relaxes his vigilance the helpless animal falls an easy prey to its cruel enemy.

A man is about as helpless to defend himself against the wiles of the Devil, as a sheep is to protect itself from the fangs of the wolf. But the Good Shepherd not only gave His life for the sheep, but never ceases His watching. No carelessness with Him. Well for us, too, that it is so, for if we were left unguarded for a moment, then would be the time of our danger, and the Devil would be sure not to let slip an opportunity of doing us harm.

Sometimes, too, in the night a terrible commotion is heard in the fold, and suddenly all the dogs in the village rush around barking furiously. Almost instinctively the slumbering families spring up, pull their garments loosely over them, and hurry out yelling and shouting, while with trembling haste the more collected ones try to light their awkward lanterns. Every one knows what has happened. While men and dogs slept, a hungry wolf ventured near, sprung at the stockade forming the sheep-fold, and forcing its way through, attacked the sheep. The guardians were asleep, and the fence was not high enough and strong enough to protect the helpless sheep.

But the eye that watches us never slumbers nor sleeps, and the arm that protects us is strong; none can pluck us out of His hand.

XXIII. 'CAN'T COME HOME'

Of all the animals that Mongols have to do with, sheep, in one respect at least, need most care. They will not stay at home, nor can they come home themselves after they have been away.

Cows and camels have their calves kept near the encampment during the day, and so surely as night approaches the whole herds of oxen and camels may be descried coming up over the horizon of the plain. They may come sooner a little or later a little, but

they never fail to come, and the boys or girls who are told off to watch for their coming, as soon as they see them shout round the encampment from what quarter the herds are appearing. The management of camel and ox herds is a very simple affair. Turn them adrift in the morning, and a little before sunset they loom up on the grassy horizon and come lowing home. Mares are not difficult to manage, but they are impracticable. Tie up the foals, and the mothers are as effectually secured as if tied up themselves, and stand by the half-day whisking their tails in idleness, refusing to eat even till their offspring is set at liberty. But sheep can be got to go away and leave their lambs, and when they do go away there is no coming home of them, except one goes and fetches them. Not only so, but they fail to feed decently if not tended, and, getting themselves into a state of restlessness and panic, keep hurrying on in their wandering till their owners send after them and bring them back, or they are taken in charge by any stranger who meets them.

A short residence in the desert enables a man not brought up amidst pastoral surroundings to detect even from a distance the disorganised confusion of a flock of sheep abroad on the desert without a shepherd. Sometimes a whole flock gets lost. One afternoon we encamped at a well. There were a few tents a little way off, and we could see that something

was wrong. Women and children were hurrying about in different directions, some of them climbing the hills and from the tops looking out over the plain. After a while they came to our tent, and we learned the cause of the commotion. Their little flock of sheep had disappeared bodily, and after being searched out were found in the hands of men who lived some distance away. Sometimes individual sheep are lost. When the flock comes home at night the count is found short, and then in the twilight with haste and hurry the strayed one is sought for, lest in the darkness the wolf should come and devour it.

How well the illustration applies which describes Christ as the shepherd come to seek and save the lost! It does seem as if man left to himself can do nothing but wander, the longer the farther, until he is sought out and led back home to God. How powerfully do all the pastoral parables come with their teaching to pastoral people, especially the saying of the prophet, 'All we like sheep have gone astray.' Men sometimes talk about natural religion and the powers of the human intellect, as if no revelation of God and no Saviour of man were needed; but these philosophies, in the end, come to little more than a flock of shepherdless sheep, and are lost in the mazy wanderings of doubt. If we are ever to come to God, we must be brought by the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

XXIV. The Pacing Pony

In Mongolia there is a class of horses which is much sought after, and brings high prices. These are the animals which lift both feet on the same side at once, and whose gait is thus much smoother than that of the ordinary class of horses. A thoroughbred horse always moves thus with or without the saddle, and even when running about the plain. It is its nature to. Good horses of this sort fetch a price three or four or even more times that of an ordinary animal. A Mongol's face beams with undisguised delight as he stands and sees a born pacer running past him with its peculiar and steady swing. In addition to the true and thorough pacer there are partial and trained pacers. These are, for the most part, horses which, having a little of the natural pacer in them, are laboriously and painfully trained by having a thong connecting both feet on the same side, so that if it does not move in the right way it is tripped up. These partial pacers, too, are a trouble to their riders, and need constant attention to keep them going in the pacing style. Often will you hear a Mongol mounted on such an animal express his disgust, and see him jerk the bridle, and pull up the steed in such a way as to set him in proper form. This process has to be repeated at short intervals, for the gait, being an unnatural one, is soon departed from, and the horse has to be pulled up once more.

Looking at the born pacer and the trained imitation, I am often reminded of men I see in the world, men who being born again and living the new life, all their words and deeds naturally harmonise with the things of Christ, and with whom to act according to what is good and right in all cases and circumstances seems to be an instinct. Then again I meet men who are like the trained steeds, with whom right action and feeling is a thing of effort, and who, when going wrong, are often tripped up by their conscience and creed, as violently as the pacer in training when he forgets his steps. They would prefer to do differently, they would indulge themselves in many things, they hanker after many things for which they have appetite, and from which they keep away merely because they know them to be forbidden, or because they know that these things are spoken against. What a tripping, hampering, hobbled life these men must lead, walking in a way that is strained and unnatural, and conformed to merely because they feel themselves bound by law so to do. The man whose heart is right, who is born again, whose natural gravitation is heavenward, feels no such outside bondage of restraint, and his actions and attitude are right not because he obeys a series of commandments, but because his affections run in that direction. Outward conformity maintained in opposition to inward desire is bondage; outward con-

formity when it is the expression of the inward thoughts and affections is the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

XXV. Looking Back

The Mongols tell a strange story—a wild, staring fable—of some traders who were wrecked on an island and kept in slavery there. At last a winged horse came to them and offered to convey back to their own country any who were willing to go. All, or nearly all, declared their willingness to go, and the company started. They had not gone far, however, when some of them began to long for the comforts and luxuries of the place of their captivity, and these were promptly dropped off.

Where did the Mongols get this story? It seems almost Christian in its origin. It is Christian in its teaching. When a wave of revival visits a place, how many men are swayed by good impulses, how many are ready to close with the offers of salvation! But after a little many begin to look back and long for things they enjoyed in the world before, and which they are unwilling to go without now. They look back and fall away. Perhaps all the Israelites were ready and willing to leave Egypt, but they had not gone far before some of them began to be tired of desert marching and desert fare, and to long for the fleshpots of Egypt. Their carcases fell in the wilderness.

There are many men who never reach the peace of salvation simply because they refuse to give up some pleasure of sin, and in such a case all that Christianity can do for a man is to make him uncomfortable. Do you wish to be saved? Christ is willing and able to save you, but to be saved you must be willing to give up every known sin. Christ saves His people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins. Looking back is fatal, and it is curious to find a Mongolian fable illustrating and enforcing the same warning against half-heartedness with which we are familiar in the case of Lot's wife and the disheartened Israelites.

XXVI. Medicine for Serpents

The Mongols have a story that once upon a time a hero of theirs was taken captive by a Chinese emperor, who, wishing to put him to a painful death, let him down into a pit amongst poisonous serpents, and went his way. When the emperor had gone the Mongol took from his bosom a little bottle, opened it, and sprinkled its contents on the serpents, which one by one, as they were touched by it, died. Then, spreading them out like heather for a bed, and doubling up the largest for a pillow, the hero slept in peace, and the emperor, on returning in the morning, was astonished to hear his prisoner, not dead, but singing.

What is a fable to the Mongols is a great reality for you and me. We are in a world abounding with sins which sting like an adder, and the end of which, to those who have to do with them, is death; and there is given unto us that which overcomes them all—the blood of Jesus Christ. From the world we cannot escape, any more than the Mongol could escape from the pit; nor can we prevent the approach to us of evil and sin; but, like the Mongol, we have that which can overcome all sin—the name of Christ. When a temptation comes, pray against it, and in Christ's name bid it begone, and see if it does not depart!

The Mongol hero slept on the overcome serpents as on a couch, and rested his head on the great serpent as on a pillow; and nothing gives assurance of confidence that God is working out in us His salvation, like the being able to look back on sins overcome and slain; and the greater the sin the more the comfort. The Mongol hero sang till morning. If we are resting on the assurance of forgiven and conquered sin, let us sing till the Resurrection morn, 'Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.'

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